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Section A. 62.



AN INTRODUCTION
TO
THE LIFE OF JESUS

*AN INVESTIGATION OF THE
HISTORICAL SOURCES*

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TO
THE MEMORY OF MY MOTHER.

PREFACE.

THE reign of facts is more extensive to-day than ever before. Fewer people do homage to theories; fewer are charmed by mystery. Science has descended from the airy conjectures of hasty generalization, and seeks now the solid ground of ascertained fact. The deductive method has yielded to the inductive, with an immense gain to calm reason and assured knowledge.

Religious inquiry experiences the same tendency. Dogmatism and speculation have had their day. Faith lays hold of and employs fact with an ever-increasing devotion. The church knows it; theology shows it. What is truth? The world awaits the answer, and stands ready to give allegiance to the truth.

In the new spirit the modern Christian tests his creed. An heirloom may be a curiosity, but he will not use it. He builds anew. "Back to Christ" is the cry of those who lay bare the

foundations for the latest statement of Christian faith. What is solid? What is durable? What are the facts? What is truth?

This book is an essay in historical criticism. It is an "introduction" in the limited sense suggested by Schleiermacher sixty years ago, which but recently has come into general use. It does not theorize about the facts of the life of Jesus, nor try to account for, nor explain them; it does not describe the circumstances under which the facts are alleged to have taken place, nor the results which they will accomplish; nor does it set forth in detail the facts themselves; it simply introduces the reader to the sources which contain these facts of the life of Jesus. It indicates the first step for an intelligent knowledge of that life.

In scope and plan these pages are designed for use in classes both of the Sunday-school and the seminary. The statements, it is believed, are direct and simple enough for adult pupils in the one, and at the same time are sufficiently precise and comprehensive for the students of the other. The advanced student will find in the notes a clew to a considerable bibliography of the subjects treated, by means of which he is recommended to pursue his investigations still further. To aid him in preserving notes and

references, a somewhat wider margin than usual has been given to the page.

The synoptic problem has long been one of the most difficult in connection with the study of the New Testament. In relation to it, there has never been unanimity of opinion amongst scholars. In Chapter XIV. the author lays anew the emphasis upon historic data, and ventures to maintain that the line of least resistance for the solution of this intricate problem begins upon the path of historic inquiry.

While not conceived in the apologetic mood, nor executed in support of a foregone conclusion, this book, it is believed, will be found an aid to faith and a contribution to the historic evidences of Christianity. If it can give this aid, and make this contribution, it will thus far accomplish the purposes of Him who prompts his children to their tasks.

A. W. A.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE LIFE OF JESUS.

CHAPTER I.

THE OBJECT AND METHOD.

IT is reported that Napoleon once asked Herder, the German philosopher, whether Jesus Christ ever lived at all. In later life the great warrior answered his own question affirmatively with emphasis.¹ But modern Napoleons — for we are all world-conquerors in our own spheres — put the same question to their Herders: What proves the life of Christ? It is not enough to cite authorities.² Every inquirer is

¹ See "Testimony of Napoleon I. with Regard to Christ," by Rev. Alexander Mair, D.D., in *The Expositor*, 4th Series, vol. i., p. 366; also Schaff's *History of the Christian Church*, vol. i., p. 57.

² Authority is, however, clear and decisive. Rev. J. H. W. Stuckenberg, D.D., recently pastor of the American Church in Berlin, in his lectures at Yale Divinity School, 1892, on "The Religious and Theological Conditions in Germany," is reported as saying, "It is now admitted by all parties, on all sides, that we have the genuine words of Christ and his apostles. There is no longer doubt as to the character of his fundamental teachings." This he says referring to German authorities.

a thinker. He demands evidence. What has satisfied one jury may not satisfy his judgment ; to know that another mind has been convinced does not convince his. He must have the testimony for himself, and must weigh it for himself.

This book is an attempt to present the documentary evidence for the existence of Jesus Christ on earth, and to show the sources whence a description of that life may be drawn. It does not inquire into the philosophy of religion. A scientific discussion of miracles, or of other recorded superhuman characteristics of Christianity, it does not raise. Assuming the validity of human testimony, it endeavors to present that testimony as it is. Who are the witnesses? and what is their testimony? are the questions which it undertakes to answer.

A man may summon his own consciousness as a witness, appealing to his own rational and spiritual nature : Do the facts here recorded commend themselves as reasonable, probable, beneficial, and satisfactory to my needs and to the world's needs, as through myself I know human nature? This subjective appeal to self-consciousness is one of the most assuring ; it is, indeed, the final court of appeal. All other varieties of evidence are referred to this judge,

self. Even in choosing authorities who shall think for us, the appeal to self-judgment is quite as complete, and the difficulty of selecting the thinker quite as nice—as the genial Autocrat of the Breakfast Table¹ has pointed out—as to think for one's self. And yet this book does not attempt to enter the domain of natural religion, or to discuss the psychology of belief, or the contents of the so-called Christian consciousness. Our inquiries shall be purely historical, and at first wholly outside of the Bible.

One line of historical investigation we shall, however, purposely omit. We shall not catechize the institutions which have come to us from the past, nor the events of history, nor the streams of progress flowing through our day. The evidence of religious and secular history to Christ is, it can safely be claimed, overwhelming. In his name men have, to use the language of Holy Writ (Heb. xi : 33, 34), “subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, from weakness were made strong, waxed mighty in war, turned to flight armies of aliens.” The achievements of the apostles, the increase of a handful to four hundred and fifty-

¹ Riverside Edition, p. 15.

two millions¹ of disciples, the remarkable continuance in the face of all manner of opposition and, despite the opposition, the growth of the church, particularly in this century of missionary enterprise, — these are phenomena in the history of Christianity, which, originating with the life of Jesus Christ on earth, and drawing their inspiration from him, attest unmistakably the actuality of that life, and its more than human character. It certainly is unique. No other being on earth has thus affected earth's institutions, events, and history. Under the influence of his name and nature barbarous races have become civilized; cruelties toward the infirm, the poor, children, and prisoners, both of war and peace, have been assuaged; slaves have been manumitted, woman elevated, and the whole estate of human nature raised by mollifying and refining forces. Such works as Storrs's *The Divine Origin of Christianity Indicated by its Historical Effects*, Brace's *Gesta Christi: a History of Humane Progress*, Uhlhorn's *The Conflict of Christianity with Heathenism*, Farrar's *The Witness of History to Christ*, Professor Schmidt's *The Social Results of Early*

¹ The estimate of Christians in the world, based upon enumerations of 1885, given in the table appended to Zöckler's *Handbuch der Theologischen Wissenschaften*, 1889.

Christianity, and President David J. Hill's *The Social Influence of Christianity*, carry conviction to a candid mind. Indeed, a thoughtful, discerning perusal of history discloses the superhuman character of the religion of Jesus Christ, and furnishes the mind with ample credence for the modest facts recorded in the Gospels of that marvellous life. Even in that famous fifteenth chapter of Gibbon's *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, in which the learned author, with the spirit of an advocate, tries to minimize the divine character of the five causes which he adduces to account for the remarkable spread of Christianity, one nevertheless discovers recorded an energy and power far in excess of the mere human causes there enumerated. Other propagandists and sectaries have had zeal, have taught the immortality of the soul, have wrought marvellous deeds, exemplified untarnished personal virtues, and have practised practical fraternity in the administration of affairs; but none have done what Christians have done, conquered the world. The divine always succeeds, not in an hour, perhaps, nor in a day, but eventually, through the lapse of centuries. Are not at least thirty-four centuries sufficient to test the permanency of this success, fifteen centuries of preparation

and nineteen centuries of fulfilment? The claims of Christianity have been tossed about, turned, pried into, analyzed, weighed, balanced, subjected to every sort of speculation and hypothesis; yet they survive, not weakened, but veritably confirmed. Where can stronger attestation be found that this life and its effects are divine?

This line of inquiry, however, though so attractive and so valuable, we turn from, as aside from our immediate purpose. Of historical evidence we shall examine the documentary alone. These documentary witnesses from the past are naturally threefold, — the heathen or secular, the Jewish, and the Christian.¹

Heathen testimony is the testimony of historians and other writers of Greece and Rome, who mention Christ or Christianity because, with other facts, these subjects come naturally within the range of their vision. In some cases the writers of this class are avowed disbelievers, who in their antagonism to Christianity give, nevertheless, though unwittingly and unwillingly, more convincing proof of the facts which they try to overthrow. Every thoughtful person turns at some time, perhaps scarcely real-

¹ Dean Farrar employs these divisions in his article "Jesus Christ." *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xiii., p. 657.

izing it, to this class of testimony, wondering if, were the church, the Bible, and special advocates all to be swept out of existence, there would still be left in the world sufficient evidence to establish the fact of Jesus Christ's life on earth, and the essential features of that life as we know it. What do secular writers, contemporary or nearly contemporary with Jesus, say concerning his life? This is our first inquiry.

A portion of the Jewish writings, the Old Testament, belongs to our Bible. But are there no other documents from Jewish hands shedding light upon the life of Him who was foretold in the Old Testament? There are Talmudic writings; there are also writings of Jewish philosophers and Jewish historians of Christ's day. We cannot expect from these eulogies or extended notices, we may even look for hatred and animosity; but we may surely expect some mention of Him who so strangely came to their nation and their folk. Are they silent? This is our second inquiry.

When a Roman, a Greek, or a Jew believes in Christ, he then becomes a Christian, and his testimony helps to swell the abundance included in our third class. Because he has become a Christian is no good reason why his testimony

as to matters of fact should be deemed any less trustworthy than if he had remained merely a Roman, a Greek, or a Jew; he is the same man, his change in convictions surely has not impaired his eyes for seeing, nor his ears for hearing facts. Why should it be thought that conversion to belief in the matters involved necessarily vitiates a man's testimony? Such, however, is the practical conclusion of many critics. It is fashionable to discredit the testimony of a friend, as though it must be partisan, and therefore untrue. But that hostility of mind has its bias and inevitable tendency to belittle and minimize, quite as much as friendliness and partisanship have to enlarge and exaggerate, all must allow. Is not, however, that Roman, Greek, or Jew, who by the unequivocal influence of Christian truth upon his soul has been won from his inherited and intensified religious convictions to accept the new faith, the better able, from the very experience of his transition, to give an unbiased, candid statement of the facts he has learned, which have had such weight with him as to overcome his prejudices? It is not necessary to be unfriendly to phenomena in order to speak truthfully concerning them. Indeed, the scientific expert, whose testimony is received with the

greatest weight in courts of law, is a partisan in the sense that he is most intimate with the facts concerning which he has been called in to give his opinion, and has devoted his life to seeking a perfect knowledge of them.¹ It is untrue to experience, and illogical, to be suspicious of testimony concerning Christianity merely because it is from Christian sources.²

Christian testimony to Christ is abundant. We cannot expect to examine it all. Yet we may inspect its varieties, and the general character of each variety, sufficiently to put us in possession of the mass of evidence in the case. For convenience this class of evidence may be examined in the following order : —

- a.* The Catacombs.
- b.* The so-called Apocryphal New Testament Writings.
- c.* Extra-Biblical Sayings of Jesus.
- d.* Gospels once current, now lost, and known only through fragmentary citations in ancient documents.

¹ See Archdeacon Watkins on this subject in his *Bampton Lectures* for 1890, "Modern Criticism and the Fourth Gospel," pp. 7-17.

² Origen puts the case pertinently : "Why should not those statements rather be regarded as inventions which proceeded from a spirit of hatred and hostility against Jesus and the Christians? and these the truth, which proceed from those who manifest the sincerity of their feelings toward Jesus by enduring everything, whatever it may be, for the sake of his words?" *Against Celsus*, Bk. II., chap. x.

e. The Church Fathers.

f. The New Testament.

In the New Testament we will scrutinize first the epistles of Paul, particularly his four great epistles, to the Romans, to the Galatians, and to the Corinthians; and then the Gospels. We must recognize the general character of the Gospels, and the light in which they should be studied, as purely historical or as peculiarly inspired documents. An inquiry into the relation of the first three Gospels to the fourth and to each other is also necessary.¹

¹ It will be observed that, in keeping with a purely historical spirit, the internal evidence to the Gospels is not set forth in this volume. Internal evidence appeals more to subjective judgment than does external evidence. This book attempts to set forth the external, objective evidence, as found in documents, and limits itself to that task.

CHAPTER II.

THE HEATHEN SOURCES — DIRECT WITNESSES.

PROFESSOR WEISS begins his life of Christ with a reference to the testimony of Tacitus to Christ.¹ No history of the church could be intelligently written without employing the information which Tacitus gives concerning Christianity. Tacitus was a Roman historian, born between A.D. 52 and A.D. 54, who died between A.D. 115 and A.D. 117. In his *Annals* he wrote:—

“He [Nero] inflicted the most exquisite torture upon those men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were already branded with deserved infamy. They derived their name and origin from one Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius had suffered death by the sentence of the procurator, Pontius Pilate. For a while this dire superstition was checked; but it again burst forth, and not only spread itself over Judea, the first seat of this mischievous sect, but was even introduced into Rome, the common asylum which receives and protects whatever is impure, whatever is atrocious. The confessions of those who were seized discovered a great multitude of their accomplices; and they were all convicted, not so much for the crime of setting fire to the city, as for their hatred of

¹ Bernhard Weiss, *Leben Jesu*, vol. i., p. 3.

humankind. They died in torments, and their torments were embittered by insult and derision. Some were nailed on crosses; others sewn up in the skins of wild beasts, and exposed to the fury of dogs; others again, smeared over with combustible materials, were used as torches to illuminate the darkness of the night. The gardens of Nero were destined for the melancholy spectacle, which was accompanied with a horse-race, and honored with the presence of the emperor, who mingled with the populace in the dress of a charioteer. The guilt of the Christians deserved, indeed, the most exemplary punishment; but the public abhorrence was changed into commiseration, from the opinion that those unhappy wretches were sacrificed, not so much to the public welfare, as to the cruelty of a jealous tyrant."¹

The burning of Rome here referred to took place in A.D. 64. Tacitus was then a boy. From other sources² we are informed that not far from this time the Apostle Paul was martyred by the same cruel Nero who had taken delight in the diabolical tortures inflicted upon the Christians.

The truthfulness of this passage from Tacitus

¹ The *Annales*, xv., 44. This translation is from Wheeler's *The Course of Empire*, p. 129.

² Clement of Rome, *To the Corinthians*, chap. v.; Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. i.; Tertullian, *Apology*, chap. v., *Scorpions*, chap. xv.; Eusebius, *Church History*, Bk. II., chaps. xxii., xxv. Conybeare and Howson, *Life and Letters of St. Paul*, vol. ii., p. 486, note 1, say: "Nero's death occurred in June, A.D. 68. Accepting, therefore, as we do, the universal tradition that St. Paul was executed in the reign of Nero, his execution must have taken place not later than the beginning of June."

has never been impugned. Gibbon defends it as historically accurate.¹ It tells little about Jesus Christ, but what it does record is significant in its confirmation of the New Testament narrative. Were there no New Testament and no church and no Christians, yet from the testimony of Tacitus, "who," it has been said,² "ranks beyond dispute in the highest place among men of letters of all ages," we still should know that in the reign of Tiberius there had been put to death a man of Judea, whose influence had been such that multitudes had taken his name, and, spreading throughout the then known world, persecuted and tortured, met death, bearing still that name.

Pliny, who lived between A.D. 61 and about A.D. 115, was proprætor of Bithynia and Pontica, provinces of northern Asia Minor, between A.D. 110 and A.D. 115, and while in this office wrote frequent letters to his emperor, Trajan, with whom he was on terms of intimate acquaintance. Pliny was a man of refined nature and noble character. Some of his sentiments recorded in his letters not only acquaint us with a man of strong and lovable personal virtues, but also set us a worthy example for

¹ Milman's Gibbon, vol. i., p. 600 *sq.*

² Rev. W. J. Brodribb, M.A., in *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xxii., p. 19.

imitation. In one passage¹ he gives as his motto, "To pardon others as if one daily needed pardon, and to abstain from sins as if one viewed sin as unpardonable." In another² he says, "To me it seems primarily important to practise justice, as away from home so at home, as in great things so in small, as in others' affairs so in one's own."

This man in the discharge of the duties of his office is confronted with a sect of people, who, though hated by their neighbors and arraigned on charges of various misdemeanors, seem to him harmless, unless the secret meetings which they were said to hold were places of intrigue and treason against the government. Of this he cannot be sure. The public clamor against these people is great. In his perplexity as to his duty in the premises Pliny pens a letter to the emperor. It reads as follows :—

"My custom it is, Sire, to refer to you everything concerning which I am in doubt. For who can better govern my hesitancy or enlighten my ignorance? At the examination of Christians I have never been present, and so I do not know in what direction and to what extent it is customary to inflict either punishment or torture. I have been to no small degree perplexed whether there should be regard for ages, or whether, whoever may be arrested, the weaker and younger shall receive no different treatment

¹ *Epistles*, viii., 22.

² *Ibid.*, 2.

from the more robust; whether pardon is to be granted to those who renounce, or whether renunciation is of no avail to those who have once been Christians; whether the name itself, though without shameful associations proved, or the shameful associations inseparable from the name, are to be punished. In the meantime, respecting those who were referred to me as Christians, I have followed this course. I have asked them whether they were Christians; if they confessed it, a second and third time I asked them, threatening torture; if they persevered, I ordered them to be led away to the penalty. For I had no question, whatever that might be which they professed, that this fixed determination and inflexible obstinacy ought to be punished. Others there were of like unreasonableness, whom, because they were Roman citizens, I made a note of to be remanded to the city. Straightway, when this policy had been inaugurated, the crime extended itself, as is often the case, and several varieties arose. An anonymous list containing the names of many was published. Those who denied that they were, or had been, Christians, I thought ought to be dismissed, when in my presence they invoked the gods and to your statue, which for this purpose I had ordered to be produced together with the images of the deities, did homage with incense and wine, and moreover renounced Christ, — a course to which, it is averred, those who are in verity Christians can by no means be compelled. Others named on the list said they were Christians and soon denied it, indeed had been, but had ceased to be, some three years ago, some several years ago, and an occasional one even twenty years since. These all also worshipped both your statue and the images of the gods, and renounced Christ. They affirmed also that the sum of their guilt, or error, was to assemble on a fixed day before daybreak and sing in responses a song to Christ as to a god, and to bind themselves with an oath

not to enter into any wickedness, or commit thefts, robberies, or adulteries, or falsify their word, or repudiate trusts committed to them : when these things were ended, it was their custom to depart, and, on coming together again, to take food, men and women together, and yet innocently ; which thing they had ceased to do after my edict by which, according to your injunctions, I had forbidden secret societies. Wherefore the more necessary I deemed it to seek, even by torture, from two maidens, who were called deaconesses (*ministrae*), what was true. I found nothing else than an immoderate, vicious superstition. And so, the investigation concluded, I have hastened to consult you. It has seemed to me an affair worthy of consultation, especially because of the number involved. For many of every age, of every rank, of both sexes also, are brought, and will be brought, into danger. The contagion of this superstition has permeated, not states only, but country towns and rural districts as well ; and yet it seems possible at present to withstand and correct it. Indeed, it is clearly evident that the temples, recently well-nigh deserted, have begun of late to be frequented again, and the sacred offerings, long omitted, to be again in demand, and provender for the sacrificial victims to come to market, for which hitherto an infrequent purchaser was found. From these indications of improvement it is easy to judge what perversion of men can be amended, if there be an opportunity for repentance.”¹

To this epistle Trajan replied as follows :—

“ You have pursued the course, my Secundus, which you ought, in investigating the cases of those who have been brought to you as Christians. For it is impossible

¹ *Epistles*, x., 96. It may be found also in the Latin in Charteris's *Canonicity*, p. 362.

to transform into the universal type anything which has its own fixed form. They are not to be searched after by inquisition; if they are arraigned and convicted, they must be punished, and yet with the intent that he who renounces his Christianity and makes his renunciation in verity manifest, that is, by worshipping our deities, however suspected in the past, may obtain pardon because of his retraction. Lists published anonymously ought not to have a place in the investigation of any crime. That follows a most pernicious precedent, and does not belong to our age."¹

These two letters relate, it is true, rather to Christians than to Christ; and yet they imply unmistakably the historic fact of his existence, and the marvellous influence of his life over the lives of men. Did Jesus Christ actually live, a historic personage? These epistles are unintelligible on any other supposition; and they present no grounds of suspicion against their integrity or their genuineness, unless it be this testimony which they bear. Even the emperor at Rome, three-quarters of a century² after Christ's crucifixion, was obliged to pause in his world-ruling to decide what treatment should be given the followers of the despised Nazarene.

¹ Trajan's epistle is appended to the foregoing in most editions of Pliny's *Epistles*. See Pritchard and Bernhard's *Selected Letters of Pliny*, p. 109.

² Trajan was emperor from A.D. 98 to A.D. 117.

This is a somewhat lengthy correspondence, but its importance warrants attention to it all. Pliny was born when the apostle Paul was a prisoner at Rome ; he was in the prime of his manhood when the apostle John lived at Ephesus, and wrote the Fourth Gospel ; his residence as proprætor brought him into territory near which Paul had established churches, and even within which Paul had at one time desired to preach.¹ The manner of worship, the purity of life, and the singleness and tenacity of the Christians' devotion to the name of their Master, predicate necessarily the existence of a personality unparalleled in the world's history.

The Emperor Hadrian, who reigned from A.D. 117 to A.D. 138, had, as private secretary, a certain Suetonius. This Suetonius wrote a book entitled *The Lives of the Cæsars*, in which were given brief biographies of twelve emperors, beginning with Caius Julius Cæsar, and concluding with Domitian. In his account of Nero he speaks of Nero as a public benefactor because he punished Christians as "a class of men of a novel and malignant superstition." In his biography of Claudius² he states that Claudius expelled the Jews from Rome because they were raising seditions at the instigation of

¹ Acts xvi. 7.

² Chapter xxv.

one "Chrestus."¹ Although not positively demonstrable, yet one cannot resist the conclusion that with Suetonius "Chrestus" is a misspelling for *Christus*, and that the secretary of the emperor, moving in official circles, knows little personally of either Jew or Christian, and has therefore failed to distinguish² between them, alleging to Christ, as though a person still living,³ the instigation of sedition amongst the *Jews*. This expulsion of the Jews from Rome, which fell probably in the year A.D. 53, is referred to by the writer of the Acts of the Apostles;⁴ but it could not have been an expulsion for a great length of time, as it is not reported elsewhere; and, according to the sixteenth chapter of Paul's epistle to the Romans, written in A.D. 58, within five years after the expulsion took place, many Christian Jews are saluted by name as resident then in Rome. After all that may legitimately be said to the

¹ Justin Martyr implies that the name "Chrestus" is common among the people for "Christus," and claims the significance of the former, *excellent*, as applicable to the latter. — *First Apology*, chap. iv.

² On this failure of the Romans to distinguish between Jews and Christians, see Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i., part ii., p. 9 *sq.*

³ Godet on *Romans*, vol. i., p. 64, quotes, "Wieseler and many other critics" as thinking Chrestus (a common name for a freedman) an obscure Jewish agitator; but Godet himself thinks Suetonius confounds the *expectation* of the coming Messiah with a living person.

⁴ Acts xviii. 2.

contrary, Suetonius should still be included among the witnesses to Christ, although perhaps not an unambiguous one.

Lucian, the brilliant pagan satirist, who, born at Samosata in Syria, had travelled far and wide, visiting among other countries parts of Asia Minor where Christians were especially numerous, took a certain Peregrinus, who had made himself notorious by self-immolation at the Olympian games in A.D. 165, "as a peg"¹ on which to hang a rude caricature of Christianity, as it had recently been exemplified in the lives, or rather martyrdoms, of Justin Martyr, Polycarp, and Ignatius. The allusions to the incidents in the career and movements of Ignatius, as well as to passages in his writings, are both numerous and striking.² Lucian must have written immediately after the death of Peregrinus, when the fact was most conspicuous before the public mind. His satire is usually dated between A.D. 165 and A.D. 170. That he wrote in the time of Marcus Aurelius is apparent from mention which he makes of that emperor as contemporary.³ Marcus Aurelius

¹ Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, vol. i., part ii., pp. 344-348, uses this phrase in describing Lucian's testimony to Christianity.

² Zahn, *Ignatius von Antiochen*, p. 524 sq., recognizes this caricature of Ignatius, a caricature conceded by Baur and Renan.

³ In his *Alexander*, § 43

reigned from A.D. 161 to A.D. 180. In this satire the founder of the Christian religion is described "as the man who had been *fixed to a stake*¹ *in Palestine*;" and as one "still worshipped for having introduced a new code of morals into life." The zeal of early converts is shown by their flocking to the prison in which Peregrinus was confined, by the sympathy conveyed from distant cities of Asia, by contributions of money for his support, and by their total indifference to life; "for," says Lucian, "the poor wretches have persuaded themselves that they will live forever." The founder of the religion, "that first lawgiver of theirs," he adds, "made them believe that they are all brothers when they have abjured the gods of Greece, and worshipped the crucified man who is their teacher, and have begun to live according to his laws." Such phrases as these add nothing to our knowledge of Jesus Christ; but, coming from a pagan writer, a source clearly independent of all partisan advocacy, do materially confirm our faith in the historicity of that life.

These are all the heathen writers whose

¹ This expression, ἀνασκολοπισθεῖς, instead of the more common ecclesiastical phrase, σταυρωθεῖς, crucified, Zahn, p. 520, says, together with some other phrases, is used designedly to give the narrative a Grecian character.

works, extant, can be taken in hand. The paucity of them is not surprising when the conditions of the times are considered. Christians were a "new" sect, as each testimony adduced either declares or implies; though so widely dispersed, they were few in numbers in proportion to the people about them; they were poor and without influence, until well along in the second century. The literature of the day also, so far as it has been preserved to us, was busied with themes far removed from the obscure yearnings and hopes and prayers and faith of the common people. But Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, and Lucian are a convincing array of witnesses. Either one alone would be implicitly believed in secular matters. Tacitus, unsupported by other testimony, is an authority for the early history and conditions of central Europe;¹ Pliny is almost our only source for information concerning the eruption of Mount Vesuvius which destroyed Pompeii and Herculaneum;² and Suetonius gives not a few incidents in the lives of the emperors, which, though uncorroborated, are received as reliable. If they are thus believed singly, much more

¹ His *Germania*, or, in full, *De Origine, Situ, Moribus ac Populis Germanorum*.

² *Epistles*, VI., 16 and 20.

should their coincident testimony be received. In the mouth of these four witnesses it must be acknowledged as proved, even though all other evidence were wanting, that Jesus Christ had lived in Judea during the reign of Tiberius, had been crucified by order of Pontius Pilate, and after his death had exerted such an influence that men willingly gave their lives for him, and, in living, endured for his sake all manner of insult and persecution. By these four alone it must be conceded that a life is demonstrated unmatched in its potency amongst men.

CHAPTER III.

HEATHEN SOURCES — QUOTED WITNESSES.

FOUR heathen witnesses have been called to the stand, and it has been said that these are all whose works are extant ; but there still remain several whose writings, though themselves lost, can in large part be recovered from quotations made by other, in most cases Christian, writers. This introduces another element, and yet does not so deprive the testimony of its primary character as to render it “hearsay ;” for it will be seen that, while the original documents have been lost, the quotations from some of them have been so generous, and at the same time so ingenuous, as to preserve the integrity, if not the entirety, of the original. When, however, the author who quotes merely mentions what another has said, the elements of uncertainty must be recognized. It is possible to misunderstand ; by employing other language, to misrepresent ; through personal prejudice and bias, to entirely pervert, whether it be innocently or designedly. Of these opportunities for error direct quotation is free.

Origen, whom we must mention later for his own testimony, flourished in the first half of the third century.¹ He was a voluminous writer. In his essay *Against Celsus*,² he says of Numenius, "And in the third book of his dissertation on *The Good*, he quotes also a narrative regarding Jesus, — without, however, mentioning his name, — and gives it an allegorical signification, whether successfully or the reverse I may state on another occasion." But little is known of this Numenius. Clement³ of Alexandria and Eusebius⁴ quote him, besides Origen. Origen terms⁵ him "that Pythagorean, a surpassingly excellent expounder of Plato, who held a foremost place as a teacher of the doctrines of Pythagoras," and characterizes him as one who "was willing to investigate our histories from a desire to acquire knowledge." Perhaps this last expression implies that Numenius received what knowledge he may have possessed of Christ and Christianity from the Scriptures, and that, therefore, he cannot be accredited in our present inquiry as an inde-

¹ The dates assigned him are A.D. 185-254. See Dr. Salmon in Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, and W. Möller in *The Schaff-Herzog Encyclopædia*.

² Bk. IV., chap. li.

³ *Stromata*, Bk. I., chap. xxii.

⁴ *Church History*, Bk. VI., chap. xix.

⁵ *Against Celsus*, Bk. IV., chap. li.

pendent witness. At best Numenius is but little more than a name. He doubtless lived in the latter half of the second century, too far away from the days of Pontius Pilate to be an eye-witness of the things about which we inquire, but not too far away perhaps, had we his writings, to bring to us, out of his own independent inquiries and research, corroborative evidence of facts in the life of Jesus.

Phlegon of Tralles, in Asia Minor, belongs in the same category with Numenius. He wrote extensively, but little remains. In Heidelberg is a manuscript containing disjointed fragments of three treatises, the titles of which, "On Marvels," "On Long-lived Persons," and "Olympiads," agree with the contents in showing Phlegon to be a man "credulous and superstitious to absurdity."¹ He was a freedman of the emperor Hadrian, and flourished, therefore, at the middle or in the early half of the second century. Origen² has to say of him, "Now Phlegon, in the thirteenth or fourteenth book, I think, of his chronicles, not only ascribed to Jesus a knowledge of future events (although falling into confusion about some things which refer to Peter, as if they referred to Jesus), but

¹ *Encyc. Brit.*, "Phlegon," vol. xviii., p. 798.

² *Against Celsus*, Bk. II., chap. xiv.

also testified that the result corresponded to his predictions." The topic under discussion by Origen is the foreknowledge of Jesus. It is surely fortunate both for Origen and for us that our acquaintance with the Christ does not depend upon the unsupported testimony of a Phlegon; although in the company of others, and for the sake of completeness, both Origen and we desire to summon him into court.

Another writer known to us only through the works of Origen is Celsus, famous for his antagonism to Christianity. The exact time when Celsus lived we do not know. Origen gives no conclusive data for determining; but he wrote, without doubt, between A.D. 150 and A.D. 180.¹ His writings are lost. Origen, however, reproduces, nearly entire, a treatise entitled, *A True Discourse*, which came into his hand from a friend, named Ambrosius, and which he essays to answer in detail. This gives rise to the well-known treatise of Origen, *Against Celsus*. Origen, in replying, repeats the arguments of Celsus one by one. It is interesting to find that a great sceptic seventeen centuries ago anticipated nearly all the assaults that appear to

¹ John Rickards Mozley, in Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, gives the time when Celsus wrote, as fixed by Keim, as A.D. 177 or 178.

modern doubters so conclusive. In scepticism there seems verily to be "nothing new under the sun."¹

Celsus divides his discourse into two parts. In the first he represents a Jew as arguing.² The Jew rejects the miraculous birth of Jesus; Mary was divorced from her husband, and, wandering about, fell in with a Roman soldier, Penthera, who became the father of Jesus; Jesus, being needy, went down into Egypt, and there learned all the tricks by which he could work apparent miracles, and on the strength of this knowledge he claimed to be God when he returned to Judca; but who could believe the statements made in regard to him? Who heard the voice at his baptism? None but himself and a companion who shared his dream, or rather his imposture. The miracles ascribed to him are absurd; any one could see such miracles by paying a few obols to an Egyptian juggler. If Jesus was God, would he have

¹ Professor Weiss of Berlin, in lecturing upon the Gospel of John, calls attention to the fact that the newest criticism has few, if any, charges to bring against the genuineness of the Fourth Gospel, which have not already been given in Bretschneider's *Probabilia*, published in 1820.

² The following epitome is that of James Donaldson, LL.D., *Encyc. Brit.*, art. "Celsus." An admirable digest of the argument of Celsus is in Bishop Westcott's article, "Origenes," in Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*.

chosen such wicked and worthless men as his apostles? If he knew that Judas would betray him, why did he make him his companion? But the story of the resurrection especially was absurd. He had been condemned publicly before the eyes of all; no one could doubt this; if then he rose again, why did he not make his justification as public? Would he not have confronted his judge, his accusers, the general public, and given indubitable evidence that he was not a malefactor? And who saw him after he rose? A half-insane woman, and one or two followers who were in the very humor to trust to dreams or to an excited fancy.

Such, in substance, are the arguments which Origen reports as put into the mouth of a Jew by Celsus. In his second part Celsus denies the facts of Christianity on philosophic grounds in the following strains: God is good and beautiful and blessed; he, therefore, cannot change, for, if he were to change, it could only be for the worse; therefore God cannot come down to men, cannot assume a mortal body. He cannot do it in reality, for that would be contrary to his nature; neither can he do it in appearance, for that would be to deceive, and God cannot deceive. God must be seen by the

soul, and men are deceived if they imagine they know him better by seeing him in a corruptible body than when they see him with the pure eye of the soul. Did God (at the time of Christ's advent) waken from sleep, and resolve to rescue a few from sin? Was he indifferent to all mankind before, to all the nations of the earth? and is he to continue to show the same special favor for only a select few?

Such are the reasonings of Celsus. It does not devolve upon us to answer his propositions and inquiries. Origen has done that in a bulky treatise of six hundred and twenty-two chapters, divided into eight books. But we do well to notice that in the time of Celsus the main facts of the Gospel narrative are no longer in obscurity, to be treated with contempt, but, well known and widely reported, are deemed worthy of his efforts to refute them. From whatever source Celsus may have derived his information concerning Christ, it is noteworthy that the material reported harmonizes with the contents of the Gospels. And, if Celsus wrote in the third quarter of the second century, the sources from which he draws must date from the first half of that century, or even earlier.

In the days of Rome's administration of affairs throughout the world, it was customary

for her officials to render periodically a report of their achievements and of events incident to their positions. Did Pontius Pilate render an account to his emperor, Tiberius? This has been a question fertile for the imagination, if not for historic evidence. Various documents of Pilate are mentioned in ancient writings; some are extant to-day, professing to have issued from him. In collections of the Apocryphal Writings of the New Testament may be found "The Letter of Pontius Pilate, which he wrote to the Roman Emperor, concerning our Lord Jesus Christ;" "The Report of Pilate, the Procurator, concerning our Lord Jesus, sent to the august Cæsar in Rome;" "The Giving up of Pontius Pilate;" and "The Death of Pilate who condemned Jesus."¹ In 1889 there fell under my eye, in a paper² published in Cologne, Germany, for a Roman Catholic constituency, a document which purported to be a copy of a brass tablet on which had been engraved the official sentence pronounced by Pontius Pilate against Jesus. All these alleged utterances of Pilate are curious, are interesting,

¹ These may all be found in *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. viii., pp. 459-467.

² The *Kölnische Zeitung*. The date I am unable to fix. A friend sent me a clipping from *The London Tablet*, containing the "Sentence" entire, as taken from the Cologne paper.

but are deserving of no credence as historic documents. They are of late origin. This "Sentence" was not discovered until 1280. The other documents, though perhaps reproducing in part genuine documents, are themselves of later origin than the first century. None of the manuscripts in which they are preserved go back farther than the ninth century.

And yet, though we do not possess the reports themselves, it is quite probable that we have information of reports which Pilate rendered to Tiberius; for Justin Martyr, Tertullian, and Eusebius make mention of such papers. In one place¹ Justin Martyr says, "And after he was crucified they cast lots upon his vesture, and they that crucified him parted it among them. And that these things did happen, you can ascertain from the Acts of Pontius Pilate;" in another² he says, speaking of the miracles that Jesus performed, "And that he did these things, you can learn from the Acts of Pontius Pilate." Justin wrote just before the middle of the second century; and it is not improbable that he had seen at that time the documents of which he speaks, which subsequently, because so frequently appealed to in condemnation of Roman severities, were destroyed by

¹ *The First Apology*, chap. xxxv

² *Ibid.*, chap. xlviii.

Roman authority, and reproduced after some length of time in the expanded, palpably spurious, forms now preserved.

Tertullian, who lived in the last half of the second century, indicates acquaintance with the same document in the following phrases: "All these things Pilate did to Christ; and now in fact, a Christian in his own convictions, he sent word of him to the reigning Caesar, who was at the time Tiberius."¹ "Tiberius, accordingly, in whose days the Christian name made its entry into the world, *having himself received intelligence from Palestine* of events which had clearly shown the truth of Christ's divinity, brought the matter before the senate, with his own decision in favor of Christ."² These are not very explicit statements, and yet they strengthen the probability of there having existed at some time official reports from Pilate concerning Christ.

Eusebius, more than a century later than Tertullian, is more explicit. In his *Church History* he says,³ "And when the wonderful resurrection and ascension of our Saviour were

¹ *Apology*, chap. xxi.

² *Ibid.*, chap. v.

³ Bk. II., chap. ii. It must be remembered, however, that Eusebius did not possess either the critical skill or unprejudiced disposition of modern scholarship, and evinces at times a willingness to repeat too trustingly what his predecessors have written.

already noised abroad, in accordance with an ancient custom which prevailed among the rulers of the provinces, of reporting to the emperor the novel occurrences which took place in them, in order that nothing might escape him, Pontius Pilate informed Tiberius of the reports which were noised abroad through all Palestine concerning the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus from the dead. He gave an account also of other wonders which he had learned of him, and how, after his death, having risen from the dead, he was now believed by many to be a god."

That the three witnesses whom we have named should be mistaken in regard to such a report would be unusual, although we need not say impossible. It is possible that they merely repeat one another; and yet the inherent probabilities point the other way. While not possessing the report itself, we may reasonably believe that Pilate could not wash his hands of Jesus until he had rendered an account of Jesus's fate unto the emperor, although what that account was we have at present no means of knowing.

And now, to sum up the indirect testimony from heathen sources,¹ we find it a testimony

¹ The edicts of Roman emperors against the Christians belong to a somewhat later period than that significant for our inquiries. The first, instigated by Galerius, but issuing from Diocletian, bears date of A.D. 303. On the testimony of early Christian writers, we may

probable, but not conclusive, because it rests in each case upon the testimony of another. Numenius and Phlegon and Celsus and Pontius Pilate bore testimony to Christ, so other men tell us, and tell us in part what that testimony was, yet we have not the testimony itself. A court of law might rule out such evidence, but the world's court of thinkers cannot afford so to do. Were all the knowledge of antiquity that is derived only through intermediate sources lost to the world, the world would be poor indeed in knowledge concerning some of the most important personages and epochs of history. We need not eliminate from our critical tribunal this indirect testimony, however cautious we may wish to be in our criticism; and yet we may remember that this kind of testimony is but an adjunct to the stronger, the direct, of which there remains an ample store.

suppose that Domitian and Marcus Aurelius issued edicts against the Christians. But these are not extant. It must be remembered also that what illustrates the history of Christianity does not prove directly, nor always necessarily, the Christ, to which line of proof our inquiries are limited.

One incident should not be left unmentioned. Eusebius (*Ch. Hist.*, Bk. III., chaps. xix., xx.) repeats the words of Hegesippus, who wrote between A.D. 175 and A.D. 189, which describe how Domitian, hearing of relatives of Christ who were endeavoring to establish a kingdom on earth, suspicious of treason against his empire, called the grandsons of Jude, the Lord's brother, before him, and having seen from their callous hands and simple answers that they were harmless peasants, dismissed them without injury.

CHAPTER IV.

JEWISH SOURCES.

“THE greatest of uninspired Jewish writers of old,” is what Edersheim says of Philo in his *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*.¹ Philo was a Jewish philosopher of Alexandria, who was born about 20 B.C., and lived certainly until A.D. 40; for at that time he made a visit to Rome which he himself describes. Nothing later, however, is known of him. Philo was thoroughly imbued with Greek philosophy, and wrote profusely,² trying to harmonize the Judaism of his fathers with the philosophy of Greece; but in all his writings he makes no mention whatever of Christ or of the Christian religion. It may seem at first thought, therefore, preposterous that he should be mentioned at all when we are seeking witnesses for the life of the founder of Christianity; but our search is not in a partisan spirit. We wish to

¹ Vol. i., p. 40. Edersheim gives an admirable sketch of the religious and philosophical position of the man in chap. iv. of his first Book.

² Eusebius, in his *Church History*, gives thirty-two titles of works of Philo; Bk. II., chap. xviii.

hear both sides of the case, if there are two sides.

Philo was an immediate contemporary of Jesus Christ. If he had given utterance concerning Christ, how important might that utterance have been at the time, and from a philosopher accustomed to pick and weigh his words. But since such utterance is wholly wanting, the inquiry thrusts itself upon us, Is Philo silent because there was no Christ at just his time to testify to? Can the argument of silence be arraigned against the Christ? We must examine the probabilities in the case.

It is not known that Philo lived after A.D. 40. Indeed, at that time he would have been about sixty years old, not destined long for this world, according to the course of life. Silence concerning him subsequently does not prove his death, but surely strongly implies it. Now, at or before A.D. 40, what opportunity or what likelihood would Philo have had to become acquainted with Christ or his teachings? Philo lived at Alexandria, far from Palestine, although in the midst of a large Jewish colony; he was a scholar, withdrawn from close contact and intercourse with men; he was also a Jew, who was bent upon upholding his own religion, and therefore unwilling, had he heard them, to listen

to rumors of one who taught contrary to his religion. With Philo, as with men of letters generally, testimony from outside sources comes almost wholly through books; literature is the pasturage, the sunshine and shade, of their intellects and activities. Jesus had left no literature; in A.D. 40 his followers had made no literature; there was nothing for Philo to peruse.

Yet Philo visited Rome. Could he have been in Rome in A.D. 40, and not have heard of Christ? Eusebius, Photius, Jerome, and Suidas, none of whom wrote earlier than the fourth century, say that while at Rome Philo met the apostle Peter.¹ But there is not one shred of reliable evidence that Peter was in Rome until shortly before his death there, in the Neronian persecution of A.D. 68. In A.D. 40 Christianity was exceedingly young. The crucifixion had preceded this date only by ten years; Paul had been converted but three or four years, and was then in retirement at his home in Tarsus, having as yet probably no clear anticipation of his great missionary journeys; the mother church of Jerusalem comprised nearly all of the church which then existed, Samaria, Joppa,

¹ This statement is started by Eusebius, *Church History*, Bk. II., chap. xvii.; and yet he gives it merely as a tradition, "it is said."

and Cæsarea alone having also heard the message from apostolic lips. There may have been a nucleus of believers at Rome at this time. We cannot say how early Christianity entered Rome. It certainly preceded the apostle Paul; for as he approached as a prisoner on his first visit, in A.D. 61, "the brethren" (Acts xxviii. 15) came out to meet him as far as The Market of Appius and The Three Taverns; and even before that, the great apostle had penned an epistle "to all that are in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints" (Rom. i. 7); this was in A.D. 58. The church at Rome was not of Paul's planting. It may have owed its origin to the dispersion of Christians attendant upon the death of Stephen¹ (Acts viii. 1, 4), or even earlier, after that day of Pentecost when the Spirit had been poured out; for on that day amongst those who heard in their own tongue were "sojourners from Rome" (Acts ii. 10); perhaps some of these, returning, had carried the new life born within them that day, and had spread it as leaven amongst their associates.²

¹ Only Judæa and Samaria are distinctly mentioned, yet the dispersion may have been broader.

² Sanday, on Romans in *The International Critical Commentary*, pp. xxv.-xxxi., says the church at Rome was formed of migrating Christians, some who came from Jerusalem, having heard Stephen's preaching, others who came from cities where Paul had preached. Cf. Godet, *Romans*, vol. i., pp. 67-69; and Lange, *Romans*, p. 32.

But this, if this history of the origin of the Roman church be correct, could not have been more than eight or nine years — allowing time for the slow manner of journeying of that age¹ — before Philo's visit. There were very many Jews in Rome, who were conspicuous for their numbers, their national and religious exclusiveness and social clannishness. Christians nowhere were distinguished from Jews by outside observers until more than a score of years after this time. When, therefore, Philo came to Rome, Christians, if indeed in Rome, were few in numbers, obscure, and indistinguishable from the Jews. To a visiting philosopher, whose mission in the city was with a Jewish embassy to the emperor to beg him to desist from requiring of the Jews the payment of divine honors, the sect of Christians in that vast city of all kinds and classes of men would have naturally been as unknown as the proceedings of a mutual improvement society in an uptown street of New York would be to Matthew Arnold when he paid a visit of a few days to that city. Philo's terminology may have colored the language of New Testament writers, since they wrote after him, and may have been acquainted with his works; but that

¹ Paul was fully six months in travelling from Cæsarea to Rome.

he should have known them or the burden of their thoughts is unnatural to suppose. His silence has been unwarrantably wrested by prejudiced critics. If it has significance, when the nature of his occupation and environment is taken into account, that significance fails to impress the majority of students as in any degree derogatory to the claims of Christianity.

Flavius Josephus is our next witness. Whiston's translation, with which nearly every home library is supplied, terms him on its title-page "the learned and authentic Jewish historian and celebrated warrior." Josephus writes his own biography. He was born in A.D. 38, and was, therefore, a contemporary with the apostles, though not with Christ. He lived certainly until after A.D. 100; for he makes mention in his life¹ of the death of Agrippa II., which occurred in A.D. 100. Three passages only in the writings of Josephus relate at all to Christianity.

In his *Antiquities of the Jews*,² in speaking of Herod the Tetrarch's defeat in battle by Aretas, King of Arabia, he says: "Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod's army came from God, and that very justly as a punishment of what he did against John, that

¹ Section 65.

² Bk. XVIII., chap. v., § 2.

was called the Baptist ; for Herod slew him, who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism ; for that the washing would be acceptable to him, if they made use of it, not in order to the putting away of some sins only, but for the purification of the body ; supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now, when others came in crowds about him, for they were greatly moved by hearing his words, Herod, who feared lest the great influence John had over the people might put it into his power and inclination to raise rebellion (for they seemed to do anything he should advise), thought it best, by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod's suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now, the Jews had an opinion that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God's displeasure against him."

This passage accords with the account given

of John the Baptist in the New Testament in all respects save one: it fails to represent the motive for Herod's action as there stated. According to the Scripture narrative (Luke iii. 19, 20; Matt. xiv. 3-12), John had aroused Herod's displeasure by condemning him for marrying his brother's wife while that brother was still living, two divorces being necessary to make the transaction conform even ostensibly to the requirements of the law. The circumstances of Herod's marriage, however, are given substantially the same in both accounts; and the nature of John's activity and influence described in similar terms, save that Josephus leaves out of sight entirely the Messianic element (John i. 23-36; Matt. iii.) of the Baptist's preaching. The attraction for the multitude, the moral precepts and applications, are the same in both narratives. Dean Farrar, whose conclusions, however, are not always framed in a purely critical spirit, says¹ of this passage, "It is very important as showing that Josephus must have been perfectly well acquainted with the facts of Christ's life, and that he has passed them over, in his usual unscrupulous way, with a reticence due only to dislike or perplexity. For in speaking of Saint John's preaching he deliberately,

¹ *Encyc. Brit.*, "Jesus Christ," vol. xiii., p. 658.

and it must be feared dishonestly, excludes the Messianic element from which it derived its main power and significance." That the narrative of Scripture has omitted nothing, and has fabricated less, is apparent from the perfectly ingenuous way in which Herod's apprehensions of John's influence over the multitudes—which in Josephus are alone mentioned as cause for John's imprisonment—are recognized as existing, although not made the prime consideration weighing with him; for, when the miracles of Christ were reported to Herod, he said, "that John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth in him" ¹ (Mark vi. 14.) The mighty works, the potent influence, stand forth in both accounts.

Whether Dean Farrar has too harshly stigmatized the character of Josephus by speaking of "his usual unscrupulous way," we can better judge a little later on, after further acquaintance with Josephus.

In the same *Antiquities*,² the historian tells of Ananus, high priest under the procurator Albinus, who took many high-handed measures. "Festus," he says, "was now dead, and Albinus was but upon the road; so he [Ananus]

¹ See Smith's *Bible Dict.*, "John the Baptist," vol. ii., p. 1427.

² Bk. XX., chap. ix., § 1.

assembled the sanhedrim of judges [illegal save under authority of the procurator, and as yet the procurator had not arrived], and brought before them the brother of Jesus who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others." It does not concern us to investigate the causes or the results of this act of Ananus. But here comes before us explicit mention of "Jesus, who was called Christ," and also of a brother named James.

This and the previously cited passage are quoted by Origen in his essay, *Against Celsus*,¹ and also by Eusebius in his *Church History*.² There are no good reasons for doubting their genuineness.³ The third passage from Josephus, however, is famous and much disputed. It likewise comes from the *Antiquities*.⁴ Criticism in general concedes that the passage is genuine, though perhaps interpolated in important parts. As we read, the portions deemed most doubtful by conservative scholars will be placed in parentheses. "At this time appeared a certain Jesus, a wise man (if indeed he can be called a man, for he was a worker of miracles, a teacher of such men as receive the truth

¹ Bk. I., chap. xlvii., and Bk. II., chap. xiii.

² Bk. I., chap. xi., and Bk. II., chap. xxiii.

³ See *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xiii., p. 658.

⁴ Bk. XVIII., chap. iii., § 3.

with joy), and he drew to himself many Jews (and many also of the Greeks. This was the Christ). And when, at the instigation of our chief men, Pilate condemned him to the cross, those who had first loved him did not fall away. (For he appeared to them alive again on the third day, according as the holy prophets had declared this and countless other marvels of him.) To this day the sect of Christians, called after him, still exists."

Renan, in his *Life of Jesus*,¹ referring to this passage, says, "I think the passage on Jesus authentic." Whiston, in *Dissertation I.*, accompanying his translation, defends the genuineness stoutly, citing its use verbatim by Eusebius, Ambrose, Jerome, Isidorus, and others of later date. Lardner emphatically rejects the passage.² We may hesitate to express ourselves quite so emphatically as the writer in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*³ on Josephus does, in saying it is "unanimously believed to be, in its present form at least, spurious; and those who contend even for its partial genuineness are decidedly in

¹ English translation, Introduction, p. 13.

² *The Credibility of the Gospel History*, vol. iii., pp. 537-542; Schaff, *Church History*, vol. i., p. 58, accepts it; so also Edersheim, and Smith & Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, art. "Josephus." McGiffert rejects it (Eusebius, *Church History*, p. 98, note 11).

³ Vol. xiii., p. 752.

the minority." Certainly it is improbable that a Jew, an uncompromising Jew, such as Josephus, should have suggested that Jesus was by any degree superhuman ("if indeed he can be called a man"); that he should have distinctly declared him to be the Christ, the anointed, or the Messiah ("This was the Christ"); or should have referred to his resurrection, except to scout it, or to marvels related of him by the prophets, which would be equivalent to confessing his Messianic character and mission. The man who could do that would cease to be a Jew, for he would become a Christian¹ and would espouse the claims of Christianity, as Josephus by no means gives indications of doing. That the phrases regarded with suspicion are quoted by some of the church Fathers does not remove, but tends rather to increase, the difficulty. Yet no writer earlier than the fourth century makes use of these lines. Before that time, therefore, ample opportunity was open for the suspected words to creep in, — if indeed anything can be said to *creep*, which is wilfully inserted with the intention, however pious, of making a man say what it is thought he ought to say, when in fact he has not said it.

¹ Lardner, vol. iii., p. 542, quotes Dr. Warburton, then bishop of Gloucester, to this same effect.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to assure one's self of the truth concerning this passage, whether a part of it be genuine, or indeed the whole be spurious. It is not safe to dogmatize. To be swayed by predilections may be our fate, but is not our intention. Were the entire passage wanting, there would remain the two preceding passages which we have cited, neither of them narratives of Christ's words or acts, yet such mention, obscure and purposely incomplete, as might naturally be expected from a Jew. Josephus and Tacitus and Pliny were contemporaries. The two Roman writers give unambiguous testimony to Christ. Why does not the Jew? Are there motives for evasion in his case which are wanting with the Romans? Certainly, we must answer; for all that the Jew might say concerning the Christ would reflect unfavorably upon the Jewish nation and rulers, stated however so cautiously. A Jewish historian could not willingly put before the eyes of the Roman world an account of the expectations raised amongst his people, the fickle aversion and disappointment, and the cruel, unauthorized conduct of the rulers and populace in accomplishing the death of Jesus, when the Roman governor publicly declared the charges adduced as unproven. It was not a page of honor to

set before the world ; and Josephus is one who writes, not for the private perusal of his countrymen, but for a wider circle of readers ; the Romans are in his thoughts, as his evident satisfaction shows when in his *Autobiography*¹ he states how his histories were received by the Roman emperor and commended by autograph letters. Josephus may profess perfect candor and love of truth,² but the motive for suppression of facts concerning Christ is too strong to be disregarded. The unscrupulousness of Josephus, to which Dean Farrar referred, must be conceded.

This becomes more apparent when we observe in Josephus's writings evident imitations of, or allusions to, incidents recorded in the New Testament. In his *Autobiography*³ Josephus describes his own youthful precocity in terms similar to those used by Luke (ii. 42-52) of our Saviour. "I made mighty proficiency in the improvements of my learning," he says, "and appeared to have both a great memory and understanding. Moreover, when I was a child and about fourteen years of age, I was commended by all for the love I had to learning ; on which account the high priests

¹ Section 65.

² See *Autobiography*, § 67.

³ Section 2.

and principal men of the city came then frequently to me together, in order to know my opinion about the accurate understanding of points of the law." When he visited Rome also, the narrative of his experiences so resembles Paul's (Acts xxvii.) as to suggest imitation: "I came to Rome, though it were by a great number of hazards by sea; for as our ship was drowned in the Adriatic sea, we that were in it, being about six hundred in number, swam for our lives all the night; when upon the first appearance of the day, and upon our sight of a ship of Cyrene, I and some others, eighty in all, by God's providence prevented the rest, and were taken up into the other ship."¹ But the strongest proof of his unscrupulousness is found in the turn which he gives his narrative in that famous place in which Christ is mentioned; for in the very next section,² following the allusion to the existence still of the sect called Christians, Josephus abruptly introduces a disgusting story of the perfidy practised upon the innocence of a Roman lady, a story which is out of sequence with the narrative following, as well as that which goes before, and can be accounted for only as a sly and sordid allusion

¹ *Autobiography*, § 3.

² *Antiquities*, Bk. XVII., chap. iii., § 4.

to the current declarations concerning the incarnation of Christ. This unclean tale is to be met with frequently in sceptical writings of a later day; Origen is obliged to reply to it in the treatise which Celsus had thrust upon the world.¹

The Talmud² is the name applied to the Jew's copy of the law, with explanations attached which had been accumulating for centuries. We might term it the Jew's Bible, or rather his Commentary on the Bible. The Talmud was reduced to writing by Rabbi Jehuda Hakkodesh, who died in A.D. 190; and, therefore, what it contains belongs to a period not later than the second century. In the Talmud, allusions to Jesus are to be found about twenty times,³ but are invariably characterized by hatred and fear. He is called "that man," "he whom we may not name," "the Nazarene," "the fool," "the hung," "Absalom," "Ben Stada," "Ben Pandera." They make an anagram of his name, putting into Hebrew letters his Greek name so as to mean, "May his memory be destroyed and his name be blotted out." The Talmud says that Jesus was a pupil of

¹ Origen, *Against Celsus*, Bk. I., chap. xxxii. See above, p. 36.

² The Talmud is described in Edersheim's *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, vol. I., chap. viii.

³ See Farrar's *The Life of Christ*, Excursus xii.

Joshua Ben Perachiah (who lived a century before), accompanied him into Egypt, there learned magic, was a seducer of the people, was tried, condemned, first stoned, then hung as a blasphemer after forty days, during which no one had come forward to speak in his favor. The Talmud undisguisedly discloses the Jewish animosity which Josephus more craftily endeavors to ignore, but does not successfully conceal.

These Jewish sources cover a narrow range. Philo says nothing. Josephus adds little that is unquestionably his. The Talmud casts slurs and shows contempt. By so doing the Talmud offers an explanation of the scantiness of testimony from all other Jewish sources. Contempt, hatred, and fear seem to have combined to still the voice and stay the pen of Jewish witnesses.

CHAPTER V.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE CATACOMBS.

THE Catacombs of Rome, though not themselves admissible as documentary evidence to the life of Christ, come, nevertheless, legitimately into the range of our topics, because of the symbols and inscriptions which their walls and contents have preserved out of the first three centuries. They add nothing to our knowledge of the details of that life, but are corroborative of its historic verity, and its extraordinary effect upon men of Rome in those centuries.

The Catacombs ¹ are great underground cemeteries, round about Rome, hewn out of the solid rock. Narrow galleries, three or four feet wide, having shelf-like receptacles in their walls for the dead, and expanding sometimes into larger burial rooms (*cubicula*), or into chapels, beneath and above each other in places, extend

¹ See "The Catacombs," *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. v., p. 206, by Canon Venables; *Events and Epochs in Religious History*, by James Freeman Clarke, pp. 1-45; "The Catacombs of Rome," *The Century*, vol. xiii. (35), January, 1888, pp. 335-313, by Dr. Philip Schaff.

their length to nearly four hundred miles, and contain, by count, upwards of seventy thousand graves. De' Rossi estimates the number of interments as more than three millions. These underground retreats were first used as simple places of burial, not for secrecy, but to satisfy two desires: (1) to avoid the necessity of cremating bodies according to the practice of Rome at that time; and (2) to have in death, while awaiting the resurrection, the companionship of fellow-believers. Worship, provided for by the chapels and incidental to burial-service, was forbidden by an edict of Valerian in A.D. 257. At times of persecution the ramifying passages and hidden chambers became recesses for concealment. After Constantine's accession in A.D. 312, when Christianity was recognized as the authorized religion, the Catacombs became the object of pious resort, and so continued until, after the taking of Rome by Alaric in A.D. 410, and the subsequent degeneracy of the imperial city, their approaches were sealed up, and their very existence forgotten through all the Middle Ages. In the latter part of the fifteenth century some Italian laborers, excavating building material, stumbled upon this Under-Rome; and, by patient exploration since, these dark recesses have been made to yield up

their secrets. Antonio Bosio, often called "the Columbus of the Catacombs," who died in 1627, spent thirty-six years of his life in exploring them.

With the symbols, monograms, and pictures, there are few dates; but the forms and pigments employed, as well as other indications, help to fix their time closely. The vine, the fish, the miracle at Cana, the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the raising of Lazarus, and the triumphal entrance of Jesus into Jerusalem, are the most frequent representations. The fish is particularly common, because it was taken as a symbol of Christ, the Greek letters of its name constituting an anagram of the phrase, "Jesus Christ, Son of God, Saviour."¹ One of these fishes, in the cemetery of Domitilla, is dated by De' Rossi, a recognized authority, as of the first century. Belonging to the first three centuries (although the first to bear a date is of A.D. 291), are numerous monograms made up of the first two letters of Christ's name.²

No fewer than eleven thousand inscriptions have been recorded. They invariably ascribe peace to the departed, and speak of a future

¹ ΙΧΘΥΣ: Ι-ησοῦς Χ-ριστὸς Θ-εοῦ Υ-ιὸς Σ-ωτηρ.

² 

life. One has the date 217. Another indicates its time as during the reign of Hadrian, who succeeded Trajan in A.D. 117, in the following words: "In Christ. In the time of the Emperor Adrian, Marius, a young military officer, who had lived long enough when with his blood he gave up his life for Christ. At length rested in peace. The well-deserving set up this with tears and in fear on the 6th Ides of December."¹

The number of martyrs buried in the Catacombs is very great. One tradition says that in one of the underground chapels (that of St. Calixtus) were 174,000 martyrs laid. Tombs are inscribed with the statement that they contain the bodies of 30, 40, 150, and in one instance of 550 martyrs.

What do these silent vaults and passages of Rome declare? Here have been deposited, beginning with the first century and extending into the fourth, the bones of millions of the dead of one faith, dying many of them because of their faith, glorying in Christ, ascribing faith, hope, peace, and joy to Christ. Can this silent city, with its stone-written testimony, its chambers of prayer, and its multitude of

¹ See *The Literature of the Second Century*, by F. R. Wynne, D.D., J. H. Bernard, B.D., and S. Hemphill, B.D., p. 19.

mute inhabitants, be accounted for save as indubitable evidence to the life of Christ in form and influence similar to the life of the Gospel narrative?

CHAPTER VI.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE APOCRYPHAL NEW TESTAMENT WRITINGS.

THE apocryphal writings now referred to¹ belong to the fourth century and later, though the second century had some of their traditions. There are twenty-two such writings centering about three topics: (1) the history of Joseph and Mary before the birth of Jesus; (2) the infancy of Jesus; and (3) the history of Pilate. Besides these, there are thirteen apocryphal Acts of different apostles, which are aside from our purpose, because not pertaining directly to the life of Christ. The apocryphal accounts of his life scarcely deserve to be classified with the other Christian sources. They are scarcely Christian in any sense, as a perusal of them at once discloses. They are false in pretension, grotesque in matter, and wholly unreliable. An epitome of two will indicate the character of all.

¹ Another group is treated in Chapter VIII. These now considered have never had currency in the church as authentic. See Hone's *Apocryphal New Testament*, pp. 17-24; *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Christian Lit. Co.), vol. viii., pp. 349-476; *The Literature of the Second Century*, pp. 97-136.

The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary gives a miraculous account of Mary's childhood. Mary, born of Joachim and Anna, as foretold by an angel, when Anna was old and barren, was brought at three years of age to the steps of the temple, where there were fifteen stairs to ascend, according to the fifteen Psalms of Degrees (Ps. cxx.—cxxxiv.). While the parents were putting aside their garments, the account relates, "In the meantime the Virgin of the Lord in such a manner went up all the stairs one after another, without the help of any one to lead her or lift her, that any one would have judged from hence that she was of perfect age. Thus the Lord did, in the infancy of his Virgin, work this extraordinary work, and evidence by this miracle how great she was like to be hereafter." She then remained in the temple till fourteen years of age. At that age, according to Jewish custom, all maidens must be betrothed. Mary refused, because of a vow she had made to keep herself for God. The high priest had respect for her vow, and yet was unwilling to disregard the custom. He called, thereupon, a council of the principal persons in Jerusalem. They quoted the words of Isaiah, "There shall come forth a rod out of Jesse," and advised a test. Accordingly all the

marriageable men of the house of David were required to produce their rods before the altar. Joseph's alone budded. The sign was accepted. Mary was betrothed to him, but she kept herself still a virgin. Shortly the angel made to her the annunciation of conception, and she bore the child Jesus.

Of the infancy of Jesus these documents have many marvellous tales. *The Gospel of Thomas* contains the following: Jesus, when but five years old, playing in the ford of a mountain stream, "collected the flowing waters into pools, and made them clear immediately, and by a word alone he made them obey him." He fashioned twelve sparrows of clay on the Sabbath. Jews reported it to his father, who came to administer reproof. The child clapped his hands, saying, "Off you go," and the sparrows straightway became living and flew away. A boy took a branch, and let the water out of the pool, whereat Jesus in anger said, "O wicked, impious, and foolish! what harm did the pools and the water do thee? Behold even now thou shalt be dried up like a tree, and thou shalt not bring forth either leaves, or root, or fruit." "And straightway that boy was quite dried up." At another time when a boy ran against him in the village street, he exclaimed,

“Thou shalt not go back the way thou camest.” And that boy immediately fell down dead. When the parents complained to Joseph, they were struck blind in consequence. Then Joseph pulled Jesus by the ear, “pulled it hard,” the narrative says; “and the child was very angry, and said to him: ‘It is enough for thee to seek and not to find; and most certainly thou hast not done wisely. Knowest thou not that I am thine? Do not trouble me.’” Afterwards, when placed under a learned teacher, Zacchæus, he immediately repeated the letters correctly from Alpha to Omega, and put Zacchæus to shame for not being able to explain the letter A. One day, while he was at play with some children in the upper part of a house, one fell to the ground and was killed. All the other children ran away. The parents of the dead child came with reproaches, and threatened Jesus. He leaped forthwith down from the roof, and called to the child, “Zeno, stand up, and tell me; did I throw thee down?” Zeno stood up immediately, and replied, “Certainly not, my lord; thou didst not throw me down, but hast raised me up.” Once a young man was splitting wood, and cut his foot in two, causing death from loss of blood. Jesus pushed through the assembled crowd, pressed the parts

of the foot together, restoring the young man immediately, and said, "Rise up now, split the wood, and remember me." When six years old, returning from the fountain with a pitcher of water, he broke the pitcher, but brought the water home in his cloak. At eight years of age, while his father was sowing corn, he sowed one grain, and gathered from it eight hundred bushels, which he distributed freely amongst the poor of the village, and gave his father a large remainder. When Joseph was making a couch for a rich man, and one piece of wood was too short, Jesus stretched it to the requisite length. One teacher, who reproved him at school, he cursed and caused to swoon away. Another, who flattered him, he blessed. His brother James was gathering wood, and was bitten by a viper. Jesus blew on the bite; "the pain ceased directly, and the beast burst, and instantly James remained safe and sound." A neighbor's child died; Jesus touched it, and said, "I say to thee, child, be not dead, but live, and be with thy mother." And directly it looked up and laughed; and he said to the woman, "Take it, and give it milk, and remember me." A man building a house, died. Jesus took him by the hand, and said, "Man, I say to thee, arise, and go on with thy work."

Such are the incidents recorded in *The Gospel of Thomas*, given in the order of their occurrence. There exist, besides, *The Protevangelium of James*, *The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, *The History of Joseph the Carpenter*, *The Arabic Gospel of the Saviour's Infancy*, *The Gospel of Nicodemus*, *The Letter of Pontius Pilate*, *The Report of Pilate*, *The Giving up of Pilate*, *The Death of Pilate*, *The Narrative of Joseph (of Arimathea)*, and *The Avenging of the Saviour*. It is not necessary to reproduce or describe them in detail. In exaggeration and improbability they resemble *The Gospel of Thomas*. They carry their refutation on their face, and have deceived no one. With us now they have significance chiefly in showing what the products of the imagination are like in dealing with the life of Christ; and thus, by contrast, they assist in vindicating the trustworthiness of the New Testament Gospels.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — EXTRA-BIBLICAL SAYINGS OF JESUS.

THE world has exercised a remarkable self-restraint in not attempting to foist upon the credulous, pretended writings of Christ. The apostles have been personated by innumerable writers, sometimes with pious, sometimes with fraudulent, intent.¹ Plato, Aristotle, and a large company of lesser prominent men of both ancient and modern times, have been imitated in a multitude of epistles and documents. But the extraordinary character of Jesus Christ has been respected by friend and foe alike, as inimitable. One solitary example exists of an attempt to palm off upon men a piece of literature as his. It purports to be an epistle written by Christ to Abgarus, king of Edessa, who had applied to him by letter for healing from disease. The whole correspondence is as follows :² —

¹ See "On the Moral Character of Pseudonymous Books," by Professor J. S. Candish, D.D., *The Expositor*, 4th series, vol. iv., pp. 91, 262.

² It is preserved by Eusebius, *Church History*, Bk. I., chap. xiii.

“ Abgarus, ruler of Edessa, to Jesus the excellent Saviour, who has appeared in the country of Jerusalem, greeting. I have heard the reports of thee and of thy cures, as performed by thee without medicines or herbs. For it is said that thou makest the blind to see and the lame to walk, that thou cleanseest lepers and castest out impure spirits and demons, and that thou healest those afflicted with lingering disease, and raisest the dead. And having heard all these things concerning thee, I have concluded that one of two things must be true: either thou art God, and having come down from heaven thou doest these things; or else thou, who doest these things, art the Son of God. I have therefore written to thee to ask thee that thou wouldst take the trouble to come to me and heal the disease which I have. For I have heard that the Jews are plotting to injure thee. But I have a very small, yet noble city, which is great enough for us both.”

The reputed reply of Jesus reads as follows:—

“ Blessed art thou who hast believed in me without having seen me. For it is written concerning me, that they who have seen me will not believe in me, and that they who have not seen me will believe and be saved. But in regard to what thou hast written me, that I should come to thee, it is necessary for me to fulfil all things here for which I have been sent, and after I have fulfilled them thus to be taken up again to him that sent me. But after I have been taken up, I will send to thee one of my disciples, that he may heal thy disease and give life to thee and thine.”

Eusebius records this correspondence with all seriousness, as an example of the manner

in which "the divinity of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" was "noised abroad among all men on account of his wonder-working power." The accompanying narrative states that, after Christ's ascension, the apostle Thomas sent to Abgarus a certain Thaddeus, one of the Seventy, who healed the king, and remained in the country preaching the gospel with great success.

It is an historic fact that several kings of Edessa, who reigned from 99 B.C. to A.D. 217, were named Abgarus, and one was on the throne from A.D. 13 to A.D. 50;¹ it is a fact also that in the latter part of the second century, when another Abgarus was in power, Christianity had a cordial and general reception in Syria; but there are no other evidences whatever to connect Jesus and Abgarus, or to substantiate this correspondence. Eusebius says that these letters were preserved in the public registers kept in the archives of Edessa, and were literally translated from the Syriac language.² But Eusebius writes in the fourth century, a hundred and fifty years after the general introduction of Christianity into Syria,

¹ See "Eusebius," *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. i., p. 100, note 1, by McGiffert.

² *Church History*, Bk. I., chap. xiii.

when the fabrication of this correspondence would have been possible and natural. He is undoubtedly led astray by his desire for words of the Master, and his lack of critical acumen. There is no earlier witness for the epistles; indeed, there is no later witness, for the subsequent references to, and later embellishments of, this intercourse are all evidently drawn from Eusebius. The documents which he used, however, have come to light. They were discovered in the Nitrian Monastery in Lower Egypt in 1841-1847, and carried to London and lodged in the British Museum. But their spuriousness is acknowledged by critics.¹

Doubtless this forgery was suggested by the words of Matthew (iv. 24): "His fame went throughout all Syria; and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases." But there is no hint whatever in the Gospels that Jesus ever wrote a word, or character of any kind, save at that time when, before the woman taken in adultery, he stooped down and wrote on the ground (John viii. 6, 8).

¹ McGiffert, editor of "Eusebius," in *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2d series, vol. i., p. 100, note 5, says: "The apocryphal character of these letters is no longer a matter of dispute, though Cave and Grabe defend their genuineness, and even in the present century Rinck has had the hardihood to enter the lists in their defence; but we know of no one else who values his critical reputation so little as to venture upon the task."

And even this incident does not belong to the oldest texts of the Gospel of John, and has been set aside by the latest editors.¹ Jesus Christ left behind no autobiography, no memoirs, no diary, no epistles, — no writings whatever, excepting upon the hearts of men. He contented himself with imparting himself.

The four Gospels contain the record of that impartation as seen, received, and apprehended by men. Yet outside the four Gospels several reputed sayings of our Lord have been preserved.² The writer of the Acts of the Apostles reports one from the lips of Paul: "Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts xx. 35). Codex Bezae ("D," preserved now at Cambridge, England, the fifth uncial manuscript in importance) gives, after Luke vi. 4, "On the same day, having seen one working on the Sabbath, he said to him, O man, if indeed thou knowest what thou doest,

¹ Westcott and Hort, as also Tischendorf and Tregelles, and the majority of critics. See Revised Version.

² A. Resch, in Gebhardt and Harnack's *Texte und Untersuchungen*, vol. iv., entitled "Agrapha" (i.e., "the unrecorded"), published at Leipzig in 1889, has collected one hundred and seventy-seven of these sayings, seventy-four of which he considers genuine, and one hundred and three apocryphal. Rev. Walter Lock, in *The Expositor*, January, 1894, pp. 1-16, and February, 1894, pp. 97-109, discusses Resch's conclusions.

thou art blessed; but if thou knowest not, thou art cursed, and art a transgressor of the law." Bishop Westcott says of this, "It is evident that the saying rests on some real incident."¹ Codex Bezae has also, after Matt. xx. 28, "But ye seek to increase from little, and from greater to be less." And Bishop Westcott says of this also, "It seems to be a genuine fragment."²

It was thought at one time that *The Epistle of Barnabas* contained a saying of Christ.³ Old editions give the expression, "The Son of God says, Let us resist all iniquity, and hold it in hatred." This is the reading of the Latin version; but since the Greek text has been discovered, first by Tischendorf in the Sinaitic manuscript, and later by Bryennios along with *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, it has been found that the Latin form *sicut dicit filius dei* had stolen into the place of *sicut decet filios dei*,⁴ and had thus prevented the text from saying, "As becomes the sons of God, let us resist all iniquity, and hold it in hatred." The ex-

¹ *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Appendix C, p. 446, note 3.

² *Ibid.*, p. 446, note 4.

³ *Barn.*, chap. v.

⁴ See Harnack, *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*, *Barn. Epist.*, p. 18; *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. i., p. 139.

pression in the same epistle,¹ "Thus he saith, They who wish to see me and lay hold on my kingdom must receive me by affliction and suffering," may perhaps be an adaptation of Matt. xvi. 24, or of Acts xiv. 22, and not an independent saying.

A common saying ascribed to Jesus among the early church Fathers is, "Show yourselves as tried money-changers." Origen, in his commentary on Matt. xvii. 31, and on John xix., and Epiphanius,² bishop of Constantia (Salanus) in Cyprus from A.D. 367 to A.D. 402, record this as Christ's utterance. Epiphanius has also,³ "I came to put an end to sacrifices, and unless ye cease from sacrificing (God's) anger will not cease from you." Clement of Alexandria cites from *The Gospel to the Hebrews* as the words of Christ: "He that wonders shall reign; and he that reigns shall rest."⁴ Origen gives: "Jesus said to his disciples, Ask great things, and the small shall be added unto you; and ask heavenly things, and the earthly shall be added

¹ *Barn.*, chap. vii.

² Epiphanius quotes this from Apelles, a Gnostic writer two centuries before him. Clement of Alexandria quotes it as Scripture (*Strom.*, Bk., I., chap. xxviii.), and refers to it three other times (*Strom.* II. iv.; VI. x.; VII. xv.). It occurs also three times in the *Clementine Homilies* (II. 51; III. 51; XVIII. 20).

³ *Penarion*, Bk. XXX., chap. 16.

⁴ *Stromata*, Bk. II., chap. ix.

unto you.”¹ Justin Martyr writes: “Our Lord Jesus Christ said, In whatsoever I may find you, in this will I also judge you.”² Didymus states: “The Saviour himself says, He who is near me is near the fire; he who is far from me is far from the kingdom.”³ The second epistle, which has been wrongly ascribed to Clement of Rome, and is now known under his name, has, “The Lord says in the Gospel, If ye keep not that which is small, who will give you that which is great? For I say unto you, that he that is faithful in very little is faithful also in much.”⁴ This is probably an adaptation of Luke xvi. 10-12, and not an independent saying. The same epistle adds, “(The Lord) says, Keep the flesh pure, and the seal unspotted, that we may receive eternal life;”⁵ and a little later, “The Lord himself having been asked by some one, When his kingdom will come? said, When the two shall be one, and that which is without as that which is within, and the male with the female, neither

¹ *De Oratis*, § 2. This is given in nearly the same words by Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Bk. I., chap. xxiv.

² *Dialogue*, chap. xlvii.

³ In his commentary on Psalm lxxxviii. 8; and Origen cites the passage almost as clearly in his Homily on Jer. xx. 8, and xxx. 3.

⁴ H. *Clem.*, chap. viii.

⁵ *Ibid.*

male nor female.”¹ Origen, in his commentary on Matthew, quite likely makes an adaptation of Matt. xxv. 35, 36, in the words, “Jesus says, For those that are sick I was sick, and for those that hunger I suffered hunger, and for those that thirst I suffered thirst.”

We read in Jerome, “In the Hebrew Gospel we find the Lord saying to his disciples, Never be joyful except when ye shall look on your brother in love.”² Ignatius of Antioch writes to the Smyrnæans (§ 3), “When the Lord came to Peter and the apostles (after his resurrection), he said to them, Take hold, handle me, and see that I am not an incorporeal spirit.” The *Clementine Homilies* (XII. 29), give the converse of familiar Scripture words in the following language, “Christ said, Good must needs come, but blessed is he through whom it comes.” Clement of Alexandria somewhat ambiguously has written, “It was not through unwillingness to impart his blessings that the Lord announced in some Gospel or other, My mystery is for me and for the sons of my house.”³

¹ II. 12. This occurs also in nearly the same form in Clem. Alex., *Stromata*, Bk. III., chap. xiii.

² In his comment on Eph. v. 3.

³ *Stromata*, Bk. V., chaps. x., lxiv. This occurs in nearly the same words in the *Clementine Homilies*, XIX. 20.

The passage of greatest length and most curious is from Papias, as preserved by Irenæus :¹ "The Lord taught of those days [Papias refers to the time of the millennium], The days will come in which vines shall spring up, each having ten thousand stocks, and on each stock ten thousand branches, and on each branch ten thousand shoots, and on each shoot ten thousand bunches, and on each bunch ten thousand grapes, and each grape when pressed shall give five and twenty measures of wine. And when any saint shall have seized one bunch, another shall cry : I am a better bunch ; take me ; through me bless the Lord. . . . And when Judas, the traitor, believed not and asked, How shall such productions proceed from the Lord ? the Lord said, They shall see who shall come to these times."

There are numerous other reputed sayings of our Lord preserved in the early Christian writings,² which resemble Gospel phrases so nearly

¹ *Against Heresies*, Bk. V., chap. xxxiii. This may be found in Charteris' *Canonicity*, p. 53.

² Westcott gives a complete collection, *Introduction to Study of the Gospels*, App. C. Cf. Farrar's *Life of Christ*, vol. ii., p. 490. Professor Margoliouth in *The Expository Times*, November and December, 1893, and January, 1894, under the title "Christ in Islam," has gathered the sayings attributed to Christ by Mohammedan writers, and not found in our Gospels. Forty-eight are given. Wherein they are different from the New Testament utterances, they have these

as to be usually regarded as mere variations of them. But few, if any, of these sayings add any actual information concerning Christ's teaching or power which we do not possess in the Gospels of our canon. These enrich in no measure our sources; they scarcely give confirmation. It may well be deemed significant of Providential design for accrediting the four Gospels of the New Testament, that so little purporting to issue from Jesus Christ is found outside of them.

characteristics: (1) an ascetic tendency, (2) a more conspicuous tenderness for animals, and (3) Christ appears more as a casuist than revealer of life.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — GOSPELS, ONCE CURRENT, NOW LOST, AND KNOWN ONLY THROUGH FRAGMENTARY REMAINS AND CITATIONS IN ANCIENT DOCUMENTS.

IN this department of our subject recent discoveries and modern criticism are making constant changes. On Dec. 3, 1892, a cable message from England informed us that, a few days before, a fragment of the *Gospel of Peter*, long known in the church Fathers but never seen by modern eyes, had been published there, and was awakening great interest. The document, with the Greek text of the apocryphal Old Testament *Book of Enoch*, and a portion of the *Apocalypse of Peter*, had been found during the winter of 1886–1887¹ by members of the French Archæological Mission at Cairo, in a Christian tomb at Akhmim in Upper Egypt. Origen, Eusebius, Jerome, and Theodoret make mention of this document; and Eusebius quotes a description of it from an epistle written by

¹ It had been withheld from publication this length of time for the purpose of deciphering and editing the text.

Serapion, bishop of Antioch from A.D. 190 to A.D. 203, to the Christians of Rhossus, who were reading the Gospel and deriving from it heretical doctrines.¹ Serapion speaks of it as used by the sect of the Docetæ, and also characterizes it as an amplification of the Biblical narrative. The fragment now in hand conforms to Serapion's description. In recording the passion of our Lord, it gives some minor details not elsewhere stated, yet it cannot be received as trustworthy. All external evidences concerning it, and its own internal confessions, indicate that it is the work of the School of the Docetæ, probably at Antioch, about the middle of the second century.²

The *Gospel according to the Hebrews* is known only from quotations, found chiefly in Jerome. It has played quite an important rôle in the minds of some critics. Schwegeler and Baur regarded this document as the original of the Gospel of Matthew, from which all the other

¹ Eusebius, *Church History*, Bk. VI., chap. xii.

² See Zahn, *Geschichte des neutest. Kanons*, 2ter Bd., 2ter Hälfte, II. Abt., s. 751; *Die Theologische Literaturzeitung*, Dec. 10, 1892, columns 609-614; *The Review of the Churches*, Dec. 15, 1892, p. 162; *The Newly Recovered Gospel of St. Peter*, by Professor J. Rendel Harris; Professor Harnack's "Bruchstücke des Evangeliums und der Apokalypse des Petrus," in *Texte und Untersuchungen*, Band ix., Heft 2; and my own article in *The Homiletic Review*, April, 1893, pp. 310-319.

Gospels were drawn. If these gentlemen were now living, it is very improbable that they would still hold to that contention; for its later origin, as compared with the canonical Gospels, is conceded by nearly all scholars. It uses the term Lord, rather than Jesus, which was the earlier custom. It softens moral difficulties; for example, in the account of the rich young man, the Lord is represented as saying, "Behold, many of the brethren, sons of Abraham, are covered with dung and dying for hunger, and thy house is full of many good things, and naught goeth forth at all from thee to them."¹ Again, after the words of Matthew (xviii. 22), "if thy brother sin against thee," this Gospel adds, "in word, and if he shall make amends;" and also corrects "son of Barachiah" of Matt. xxiii. 35 into "son of Jehoiada," according to 2 Chron. xxiv. 20. It also increases the marvellous element; for example, at the baptism of Jesus, "It came to pass when the Lord was come up from the water, the whole fountain of the Holy Spirit came down and rested upon him, and said to him, O my son, in all the prophets I was awaiting thee, that thou mightest come and that I might find rest in thee; for thou art my rest,

¹ Cf. Luke xviii. 22.

thou art my first born son, who reignest forever." The Holy Spirit is called in it the Mother of the Lord; and Jesus is represented as saying, "But now, my Mother, the Holy Spirit, took me by one of my hairs, and carried me away to the Mount Tabor." These are phrases and features met with in the second, not in the first century. It could not be deemed, therefore, were it extant, a trustworthy document.¹

The *Gospel of the Ebionites* is but a name. Epiphanius mentions it, but, as he describes it, it was "called the Gospel according to Matthew, not entire and perfectly complete, but falsified and mutilated, which they call the Hebrew Gospel."² This would seem to indicate that it was either the canonical Gospel of Matthew in a corrupt form, or nothing more than the *Gospel according to the Hebrews* just mentioned. At any rate, it does not exist for our use, and can add nothing to our knowledge of Christ.

¹ See Dr. E. A. Abbott, *Encyc. Brit.*, "Gospels," vol. x., p. 818, note 1; Professor Lipsius, in Smith & Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, "Gospels Apocryphal," vol. ii., pp. 709-712; Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, Appendix D; Fisher's *The Supernatural Origin of Christianity*, p. 167.

² Salmon, *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 176, says of it: "I look on it as a third-century forgery, made with heretical intent by one who was well acquainted with the Greek Gospels, in a workshop discredited by other forgeries and impostures." See Epiphanius, *On Heresies*, § 29. Westcott, *Introduction*, Appendix D, 11.

A *Gospel of the Clementine Homilies* is sometimes spoken of. The *Clementine Homilies*¹ are a series of short sermons, once believed, according to their ascription, to have been written by Clement of Rome, who lived at the close of the first century; but a critical examination of their text proves them to belong to the end of the second, or beginning of the third century; and the quotations from Scripture which they contain, though somewhat different from the language of our Gospels, cannot establish the fact of a different Gospel, but show, quite likely, merely that the writer quoted carelessly from memory.

Another Gospel which has made itself a reputation, is that of *Marcion*.² This man, who died in A.D. 165, sought to reform the church by explaining the sharp contrasts between the dispensations of the Old Testament and the New, and the antitheses of Paul's writings, upon law and grace, as expressive of a dualistic God, one good, the other malign. Of the good God, he regarded Jesus Christ to be a manifestation. Accordingly he endeavored to

¹ *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. viii., contains translation by Dr. Wm. Smith, and introduction by Professor M. B. Riddle. See Westcott, *Introduction*, Appendix D, III.

² Salmon, *Introduction*, pp. 203-208; Harnack, *Encyc. Brit.*, "Marcion;" Westcott, *Introduction*, Appendix D, IV.

gain a picture of this good God and his Son, by eliminating from the life of Jesus all incidents which he deemed late additions unwarrantably attached to it. He made a collection of New Testament writings which he pronounced canonical, and is the first to have done so. This collection consisted of one Gospel and ten Epistles of Paul. At one time that one Gospel was thought to be an original, independent Gospel; but in the writings of Tertullian and Epiphanius, who have preserved the material for reconstructing it, it has been found more recently to be but a mutilated edition of Luke.¹

Celsus, in his famous *True Discourse*,² speaks of drawing his information from "the writings of the disciples of Jesus." But he adduces nothing which is not found in our Gospels; and Origen, in replying to him, does not charge him with relying upon false documents, but of blundering in using facts drawn from these sources; for he says,³ concerning his arguments against Celsus, "We showed that there has been a great deal of nonsensical

¹ Lipsius, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, "Gospels Apocryphal," vol. ii., p. 714, gives an epitome, as well as an estimate, of this Gospel.

² See above, p. 35.

³ *Against Celsus*, Bk. II., chap. lx:iv.

blundering, contrary to the writings of our Gospels."

No Gospel, therefore, of value, additional to the four we now possess, so far as can now be seen, has ever been lost to the world by which the world is a loser in the knowledge of Jesus. Others are mere names, *The Gospel according to the Egyptians*, the Gospels of *Basilides*, of *Cerinthus*, of *Apelles*,¹ and of *Matthias*. It is altogether possible that we shall yet know these documents better, perhaps by discovery of manuscripts in libraries, monasteries, or tombs unexplored; or perhaps by the closer study and sounder conclusions of modern critics upon sources already known.²

In this connection, though not a distinct Gospel in the same category with those just mentioned, yet presenting distinctive features, I should speak of the recently discovered Syriac translation of the New Testament, discovered in February, 1892, and transcribed in February, 1893, by Mrs. Lewis and Mrs. Gibson, two sisters, who at the suggestion of Professor J. Ren-

¹ Lipsius regards this as "probably identical with Marcion's Gospel." Apelles was a disciple of Marcion. See Smith and Wace's *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, "Gospels Apocryphal," vol. ii., p. 715.

² The *Diatessaron* of Tatian, composed about A.D. 160, was long thought to be a distinct Gospel. But see p. 129.

del Harris visited Egypt and Arabia for careful investigation of ancient manuscripts. The story of this manuscript and of its historical and critical value has been told by the discoverers and their collaborators.¹

It is recognized as the oldest Syriac version of the Gospels extant, — older than the Curetonian, and older than the Peshitto. Syriac, it will be remembered, was the dialect of Palestine in the time of Jesus, corrupted from the older Hebrew; it was the language of the people, amongst whom Greek had not gained complete currency. Into this home-speech, naturally, the Gospels would soon be translated. This version, it is claimed, was made not later than A.D. 150.²

A number of variations from our Gospels exists in this text; but most of them do not affect materially the character of the Christ delineated or the substance of his teaching.

¹ *The Four Gospels in Syriac*. Transcribed from the Sinaitic Palimpsest by the late Robt. L. Bensley, M.A., Lord Almoner's Professor of Arabic in the University of Cambridge; and by J. Rendel Harris, M.A., Hon. Litt. D., Dublin, Lecturer in Paleography in the University of Cambridge and by T. Crawford Burkitt, M.A., with an Introduction by Agnes Smith Lewis; *A Translation of the Four Gospels from the Syriac of the Sinaitic Palimpsest*, by Mrs. Agnes Smith Lewis; and *How the Codex was Found; a Narrative of Two Visits to Sinai*, by Mrs. Margaret Dunlop Gibson.

² Dean Farrar, *The Expositor*, 5th series, vol. i. (January, 1895), p. 8, "The Sinaitic Palimpsest of the Syriac Gospels."

One passage, however, demands our attention; viz., Matt. i. 16-25. Matt. i. 16 reads, "Jacob begat Joseph; *Joseph, to whom was betrothed Mary the Virgin, begat Jesus*, who is called Christ;" Matt. i. 21 reads, "For she shall bear *thee* a son;" and Matt. i. 25 reads, "And he married his wife, and she bare *him* a son, and he called his name Jesus."

The readings in Italics are startling. And yet, right beside them, it must be noticed Mary is still called "*the Virgin*;" Matt. i. 18 still reads, "When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, *before they came together she was found with child of the Holy Ghost*;" verse 20 still contains these words, "for that which is conceived in her *is of the Holy Ghost*;" and the rest of the passage remains unchanged excepting in verse 25, the words "*knew her not till*" are omitted.

Obviously the passage is inconsistent with itself. Obviously, therefore, some bungling hand has tampered with the text. Now, in which direction is it more likely that the corruption has proceeded? This question is not for science or philosophy to answer. It is a question of evidence. Textual criticism must be called to the stand. One manuscript alone, a cursive of the fourth or fifth century, known

as *k*, so far conforms to this Syriac rendering as to omit "*and knew her not till;*" but all other authority of the manuscripts is against these new readings. If it be claimed, nevertheless, that this version is older than any of the Greek texts extant, then it may be replied (1) that the Itala version is as old as this, and the Itala presents the standard reading to which we have been accustomed; and (2) age alone does not guarantee correctness; values must be tested by a wide comparison of texts, and in this direction textual criticism has a service still to render.¹

In 1894 a Russian gentleman, M. Nicolas Notovitch, published in Paris *The Unknown Life of Christ*,² the manuscript of which, he alleged, had been read to him by the Chief Lama of the Himis Monastery in the heart of Tibet, at a time when, disabled by a broken limb, he had been hospitably received and nursed in the monastery. This *Life* states that Jesus spent the years of his youth from fifteen to twenty-nine in India, where he studied

¹ On the subject of the doctrine of the immaculate conception as affected by this manuscript, see Dean Farrar's article, already cited, *The Expositor*, January, 1895, pp. 12-19; and Professor Wm. Ince, *The Expositor*, June, 1895, pp. 401-411, "The Miraculous Conception and Virgin Birth of Jesus."

² *La Vie Inconnue de Jésus-Christ*. It has appeared in eleven editions, and has been translated into English.

Sanscrit and Pali, read the Vedas and the Buddhist canon, and imbibed the principles which he subsequently preached in Palestine as his Gospel. Likenesses between Christianity and Buddhism have often been noticed.

This *Life*, according to M. Notovitch, was taken down by Jewish merchants who came to India immediately after the crucifixion, in about A.D. 35. It was written in Pali, the sacred language of Southern Buddhism. The scrolls were brought from India to Nepaul and Makhada in about A.D. 200, and from Nepaul to Tibet, and are now preserved at Lassa. Tibetan translations exist in several places, and it is one of these which is in the Himis Monastery.

This *Life* is entirely devoid of the miraculous element, and repudiates the resurrection. If it is true, it must materially modify the usually received conceptions of Jesus Christ. Is it true?

Professor Max Müller, in an article entitled "The Alleged Sojourn of Christ in India," appearing in *The Nineteenth Century* for October, 1894, pronounces the account spurious, and charitably — to M. Notovitch — suggests that the Russian traveller has been imposed upon by crafty priests of Tibet. But an article

in *The Nineteenth Century* for April, 1896, by Professor J. Archibald Douglas of the Government College in Agra, under the title "The Chief Lama of Himis on the Alleged *Unknown Life of Christ*," reports an interview with the head of the Himis Monastery, which exposes so completely the literary deception attempted by M. Notovitch that Professor Max Müller appends a note to Professor Douglas's article, withdrawing every particle of the cloak of charity with which at first he had undertaken to shield the Russian.

The Chief Lama of Himis could not have conversed with M. Notovitch upon "the religions of the Egyptians and Assyrians and the people of Israel," as alleged, for he is not acquainted with these religions. He did not read to M. Notovitch a Buddhist account of *Issa*, for he knows of no such account; there is no such manuscript, as alleged, in the monastery, and he has never heard of such an one elsewhere. At no time has a European traveller with a broken limb been harbored within the walls of the monastery, and all the inmates of the monastery are ignorant of such an occurrence. The Sind Valley, in which M. Notovitch affirms he was beset with "panthers, tigers, leopards, black bears, wolves and jackals," has no such

beasts within it. Beasts, broken legs, and Buddhist manuscripts are declared to be the pure fiction of M. Notovitch's imagination ; and both Professor Douglas and Professor Max Müller agree in terming the account a mendacious fraud, and the perpetrator a wilful liar. Plain epithets are justifiable when history, either sacred or profane, is thus invented.

Of Gospels, therefore, while we hear of many names, and see some with false and specious claims foisted upon public attention, we have yet to discover one which adds a credible item to the accounts given in the four Gospels of the New Testament.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES. — THE CHURCH FATHERS.

THE Fathers of the church are now usually distinguished under four titles: the apostolic, the apologetic, the ante-Nicene, and the post-Nicene. Sometimes they are designated by the language which they employed, as Greek Fathers and Latin Fathers. The apostolic Fathers are those who during a part of their lives were, or until recently were supposed to be contemporary with the apostles. The apologetic Fathers are those who, beginning about the middle of the second century, wrote in defence of Christianity against the objections of doubting Jews and pagans. The ante-Nicene Fathers are those who wrote before the Council of Nice, in A.D. 325, and include both the apostolic and apologetic, with others of the time. The post-Nicene Fathers are those who lived and wrote after the Council of Nice. In a later chapter, many of these earlier Fathers will be summoned as witnesses to the existence and origin of the New Testament books; but in

this chapter we must examine them to ascertain what they themselves tell of Jesus, and if they tell anything that is not found in the New Testament or in other sources.

The apostolic Fathers¹ are Clement of Rome, Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Papias of Hierapolis, and the writers, now unknown, of the documents bearing the names, *The Epistle to Diognetus*, *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, *The Epistle of Barnabas*, and *The Shepherd of Hermas*.

The Epistle of Clement was called forth by a request from the Christians at Corinth for advice in the case of division in the church over an unruly member. Clement replies in behalf of the church at Rome, counselling forbearance, and citing instances of patience and sacrifice from the Old Testament and more modern times. Of Jesus nothing, elsewhere unrecorded, is mentioned. It is, however, a sweet-spirited epistle, and useful for devotional reading to-day, despite an absurdity or two, such as the introduction of the mythological phœnix story as a proof of the resurrection (chap. xxv.). It used to be read at one time in the church as

¹ The literature of the apostolic Fathers is extensive. See especially *Patrum Apostolicorum Opera*, edited by Gebhardt, Harnack, and Zahn; the late Bishop Lightfoot's *Apostolic Fathers*, and the late Dr. Schaff's *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*.

a part of worship, and was then held in such high esteem as to be appended to the books of the New Testament canon, as is the case with the Alexandrine Codex, written in the fifth century.

The author of *The Epistle to Diognetus* terms himself a "disciple of the apostles," but more clearly indicates the early time of writing by frequent references to Christianity as *new*. He gives a brief account of the beginning of Christianity, the present manners of Christians, their relation to the world, and of the significance of Christ's coming; but he adds no new facts concerning Christ himself.

The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles purports to be the substance of the teaching of the apostles on receiving converts and organizing churches. It contains instruction in regard to the two ways, of life and of death, baptism, fasting, praying, communion, Sunday, sacrifices, the officers of the church, and watchfulness in preparation for Christ's return. It quotes largely from the New Testament language, but supplements in no measure the narrative of Jesus' life, save, as do all the writings of this period, by showing the extraordinary influence of that life.

These three documents were written, it is

generally acknowledged by critics, not far from the year A.D. 100, and probably on the earlier, rather than on the later side of that date. Several epistles of Ignatius and one of Polycarp are extant which were penned about A.D. 110. These men were bishops, the one of Antioch, the other of Smyrna, and wrote to churches with advice for church life and church work. Their epistles are invaluable for showing the spread of Christianity, the environment of the early church, and much that pertains to her history; but they independently add nothing to our knowledge of the details of the life of Jesus.

The Epistle of Barnabas, a little later still, reasons out extensively the inadequacy of the old dispensation and its complete abrogation by the new, and concludes with a section upon the two ways, of life and of death, very much like that with which *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* opens. But it presents no new biographical data of Jesus.

So also Papias and Hermas add nothing to the exactness of the picture of the earthly career of Christ. The former is known only in a few quotations preserved in later church Fathers. The latter writes in the form of an allegory, which, though sometimes called *The*

Pilgrim's Progress of the Second Century, is very much inferior to the immortal work of the tinker of Bedford jail. *The Shepherd of Hermas* consists of "Visions," "Mandates," and "Similitudes." The scene of the visions is near Rome. In the first the church appears as an aged woman, aged because so long in the eternal purposes of God; she is sick and at the point of death, because at length the old dispensation is to pass away; yet beneath her is an easy chair, which from the expression "The scribes sat in Moses' seat," is used to typify the Old Testament. Then she vanishes away. In the next vision the woman appears younger, and, standing, is engaged in reading a little book, which indicates the New Testament revelation, not yet complete; as she reads, she orders six young men to build her a tower, to typify her spiritual creation. In the third and last vision, the woman, now quite young, and, by reason of the *good tidings* received, joyous, is carried off to the tower, and is seen there sitting on a bench,—a bench having four legs, which becomes the permanent possession of the church. Then a shepherd appears, and pronounces the "Mandates" and "Similitudes" as practical instruction to Christians. The value once ascribed to this *Shepherd* may be

seen from the fact that it is appended to the Sinaitic manuscript of the New Testament of the fourth century, one of the four great manuscripts preserved to us.

All of these writings are of the utmost importance as evidence of the actuality of the life of Jesus and of the early existence of the record of that life, although they themselves relate none of the incidents of the life. In a perfectly naïve way they assume an acquaintance on the part of their readers with the words and deeds of Jesus.

The apologists, on the defensive, were obliged to state and explain facts and array arguments as their predecessors had not been obliged to do. One peculiarity about their writings is the abundance of quotations from the New Testament. It has been averred that, if the New Testament were to-day by some strange catastrophe eliminated from the earth, its essential contents, and indeed nearly its entire phraseology, could be reproduced from the quotations of the apologists. To such a degree have early scepticism and theological strife undesignedly aided in the preservation and authentication of the documents which they generally sought to overthrow and destroy.

Justin Martyr, the first of the apologists,

active with his pen the decade preceding A.D. 150,¹ while giving many facts of the Gospels, adds to them merely these: that Jesus was born in a cave;² that the Wise Men came from Arabia;³ that the Lord's miracles were ascribed to magic by some of the people who beheld them;⁴ and that a fire was kindled in the Jordan as soon as Jesus stepped into it to be baptized.⁵

Celsus, as reported by Origen, makes Jesus "little" and "ill-favored" and "ignoble,"⁶ and represents the mother of Jesus as working with her own hands at spinning.⁷

The Clementine Homilies make John the Baptist to have had thirty disciples, like the days of the moon, and Jesus to have had twelve apostles, like the months of the sun,⁸ and the ministry of Jesus to have begun at the time of the vernal equinox.⁹

Clement of Alexandria represents Jesus as commanding his disciples to remain twelve years at Jerusalem.¹⁰

¹ In his *First Apology*, chap. xlv., he says, "Christ was born one hundred and fifty years ago."

² *Dialogue with Trypho*, chap. lxxviii.

³ *Ibid.*, chap. lxxvii., and often.

⁴ *Ibid.*, chap. lxix.; *First Apology*, chap. xxx.

⁵ *Ibid.*, chap. lxxxviii. ⁶ *Against Celsus*, Bk. VI., chap. lxxv.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Bk. I., chap. xxviii. ⁸ *Hom.* II., chap. xxiii.

⁹ *Hom.* I., chap. vi.

¹⁰ *Stromata*, Bk. VI., chap. v.

According to Irenaeus, the heretical sect of Valentinians maintained that Jesus was with his disciples eighteen months after his resurrection.¹

These are the chief contributions as to alleged facts which come to us from the early Christian Fathers, distinct from the New Testament record. By these no serious modification of the New Testament delineation of the Christ would be wrought, either in detail of word and act, or in the characterization of his nature and mission. The Fathers are confirmatory witnesses. They do not invent. Their abstention from fiction and from assertion on their own authority is remarkable. Already they revere the Life, and they regard the apostles who were near that Life as far superior to themselves. They refer to, cite, and reproduce the Gospel narratives; and their chief evidential value, it will soon be seen, lies in their early testimony to the books of our New Testament canon.

¹ *Against Heresies*, Bk. I., chap. iii., § 2.

CHAPTER X.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE EPISTLES OF PAUL.

AFTER we have examined all other sources, while we find corroboration and ample certitude to the fact of Christ's life on earth, yet are we dependent upon the narratives of the New Testament for the details in word and work of that life which was such a potent factor in the world's history.

The writings of Paul of Tarsus occupy an important place, not only in the canon of Scripture, but also in the history of the criticism which has been brought to bear upon the New Testament. Four of his epistles have stood forth even more conspicuously than the others, — that to the Romans, the two to the Corinthians, and the one to the Galatians. Until within a few years it might have been said that the genuineness of these four chief epistles had never been doubted. But of late, on purely arbitrary, subjective, and dogmatic grounds, a school of Dutch critics has assailed their integrity, and,

by so doing, attempted to weaken their claims to genuineness.¹ The want of success on the part of this new group of antagonists is becoming more and more apparent; indeed, the attack has nowhere occasioned alarm, and has secured attention only from those whose special business it is to investigate all assertions in regard to the Scriptures, and allow every phase of thought to be heard.

That company of critics, active fifty and sixty years ago, known as the Tübingen School, accepted Paul's four great epistles as genuine and trustworthy, though disparaging, if not altogether rejecting, all other books of the New Testament.

These epistles claim our attention not alone because of their general acceptance as historic, but also because of the time of their composition. Chronologically the epistles of Paul are the first and oldest documents within the New Testament canon, penned at a time when, as yet, our Gospels were unwritten. Introductions to the New Testament frequently begin with these epistles.

¹ See my articles, "Criticism of the Epistle to the Galatians," *Old and New Testament Student*, February, 1891, pp. 93-96; and "Some Recent Criticisms of the Pauline Epistles," in the same, July-August, 1892, pp. 39-44.

It is important, therefore, as well as interesting, to see what facts concerning the Christ, Paul mentions in his epistles. Paul is a character "whose personality stands forth with absolute clearness in the light of history."¹ No one has had the hardihood to deny his historical existence. He was a man of commanding intellect; converted from a publicly avowed hostility to Christianity and all Christians, he became a most ardent advocate and propagator of the religion, and a zealous ally and courageous leader amongst the believers, ready at any moment to sacrifice his life, if need be, for them and their cause; and this man, thus converted, gives his testimony within twenty-five years after Christ's ministry.

Paul's testimony, too, because undesigned, is all the more convincing. He set himself to no biographer's task. Not memoirs nor treatises, but epistles, called forth by the seemingly unimportant exigencies of his preaching and travels, became his literary remains. And yet these epistles teem with allusions and statements sufficient to delineate clearly the chief features in the earthly career of Jesus.

The four chief letters were penned between

¹ Dean Farrar, *Encyc. Brit.*, art. "Jesus Christ," vol. xiii., p. 659.

A.D. 55 and A.D. 59.¹ In them Paul brings out plainly the following facts :²—

1. That Jesus, according to the flesh, was of the seed of David (Rom. i. 3).

2. That Jesus was the Son of God (Rom. viii. 3, 32; ix. 5; Gal. iv. 4).

3. The crucifixion of Jesus (1 Cor. ii. 2, cf. Rom. iv. 25; v. 6–10; vi. 6; Gal. ii. 20; iii. 13; vi. 12, 14).

4. The Lord's Supper (1 Cor. xi. 20–26).

5. The resurrection (1 Cor. xv.; Rom. i. 4; iv. 24; vi. 4, 9; vii. 4; viii. 11, 34; x. 9; xiv. 9; 2 Cor. iv. 14; v. 14, 15; Gal. i. 1).

Other facts Paul plainly implies; for example, “the gentleness and meekness of Jesus” (2 Cor. x. 1); the preaching of Jesus, from frequent allusions to Christ's gospel (Gal. i. 8; Rom. xv. 8) and to the kingdom of God as the burden of Christ's preaching (2 Cor. vi. 9; Gal. v. 21); and that Jesus sent out apostles (his apostles being referred to, e.g., Gal. ii. 8).

¹ Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, Appendix H., date 1 and 2 Cor. and Gal. in A.D. 57, and Rom. in A.D. 58; Holtzmann, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, dates Gal. in A.D. 55 or 56, and 1 and 2 Cor. and Rom. in the winter of A.D. 58 and spring of A.D. 59.

² See Dean Farrar's article, “Jesus Christ,” *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xiii., p. 659, note 6; Westcott's *Gospel of the Resurrection*, § 46 sq., p. 108 sq.

But the resurrection receives chief attention. That which is the most miraculous, most disputed, is the best attested by Paul. One entire chapter is devoted to this subject (1 Cor. xv.); and elsewhere, in a variety of forms, the fact of the resurrection is most clearly and explicitly stated.

The remaining epistles of Paul confirm many of the statements of fact made in the Gospels. The same may also be said of the epistles of Peter, James, and John. They are corroborative witnesses. It is remarkable that, though making no attempt to write a life of Christ, and penning letters called forth by seemingly trivial circumstances, Paul and the other apostles should have revealed, both by direct statement and by allusion and implication, so much of the historic character of Jesus.

CHAPTER XI.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE GOSPELS ; THEIR GENERAL CHARACTER.

ALL sources, hitherto mentioned, though tributary, are yet far inferior in definiteness and completeness to the four Gospels of the New Testament, which bear the names of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Yet it must be acknowledged at the outset that these writings are but memoirs.¹ They are not complete biographies. They do not profess to describe the entire life of Jesus, but merely to present salient features here and there. This is their own confession.

1. Observe the scantiness of the record. The entire New Testament does not equal in length and comprehensiveness one volume of any of the well-known biographies of famous men, like Boswell's *Life of Johnson*, Irving's *Life of Washington*, or Carlyle's *Life of Frederick the Great*. Then, of the twenty-seven books within its covers, only four are directly descrip-

¹ See Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 46 sq.

tive of Jesus, in bulk a little less than one-half of the entire New Testament (about five-elevenths). Then, too, the Gospels duplicate each other in large part. If all that is repeated in parallel passages be eliminated, the narrative of original parts is reduced to very small proportions.

From the nature of the case we know that not all of Christ's sayings could be reported. No book printed, no series of volumes ever published, no manuscripts ever penned, could contain all that any one person, however taciturn, in the course of three years' contact with the people of city and country, would have uttered in conversation and public address, in inquiries and answers, in exhortations and soliloquies, in prayer and praise. But Jesus was not taciturn and uncommunicative. It was his very mission to teach, to preach, to proclaim the kingdom of God as at hand. All the witnesses hitherto summoned, heathen, Jewish, and Christian, obviously testify that his teachings on earth were of extraordinary influence among men, and must, therefore, have assumed considerable proportions in form and phrase; and yet the most extensive account is but fragmentary, and must therefore be regarded as suggestive rather than exhaustive.

2. Of the works of Jesus, but a few are described in the narrative. This is not an assumption, but is declared in the narrative itself. Of the "mighty works" done in Chorazin and Bethsaida (Matt. xi. 21; Luke x. 13) referred to by Christ as sufficient to have convicted the wicked cities of Tyre and Sidon, had they been done in them, we know nothing. At the first Passover in Jerusalem "many believed on his name, beholding his signs which he did" (John ii. 23). Of these signs we have no account whatever. John xx. 30 declares: "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book," and John xxi. 25: "And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books which should be written."

3. Many also, of whom we have the barest mention, believed upon him. John ii. 23 reads, "many believed on his name, beholding the signs which he did;" and in John iii. 26 the disciples of John the Baptist are reported as saying, "Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou hast borne witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him." John the Baptist had such success in

drawing the multitudes unto him and making disciples, that Matthew (iii. 5, 6) wrote: "Then went out unto him Jerusalem and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan; and they were baptized of him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins;" and yet the Fourth Gospel represents the success of Jesus as greater in number of disciples secured (John iv. 1-3), "When therefore the Lord knew how that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John," etc. Because of the raising of Lazarus many Jews went away and believed on Jesus (John xii. 11); and at another time even some of the rulers believed upon him, yet fearing the Pharisees, and loving the praise of men, did not confess him (John xii. 42). Of all these persons the narrative gives only these brief allusions.

It is obvious, therefore, that an exhaustive record of the life of Jesus does not exist. The best we have is deficient in an account of the words and the works and the effects of Jesus on the hearts of men. The *life* is plainly more than the record. The record condenses and epitomizes; the life was vast and full. The record is fragmentary and presents gaps; the life was continuous. What is recorded must be regarded as specimens of the whole. The

main features are delineated, the chief characteristics are brought out. Yet whoever studies the life of Jesus, in order to use the material with proper appreciation, must leave a place in every calculation for the unwritten part. As a practical consequence the elements of that life, and the details of its existence on the earth, will necessarily assume larger proportions. In problems of New Testament chronology, where the data at hand seem to allow choice between a shorter and a longer period of time, the careful student of historic conditions will gradually acquire the tendency to accept the longer period as the more likely to be the true one, since it the better makes allowances for the omissions which must be assumed.

Strauss and Baur¹ have laid emphasis upon the natural tendency of men to fashion and invent marvels, and Renan² has pointed out the equally natural tendency to idealize and magnify virtues and excellences in a hero; but a no less patent tendency exists in men to ignore that which is above them, and turn from that which seems to them impossible, or even difficult, to understand. Jesus himself said (John

¹ David Friedrich Strauss, in *Das Leben Jesu*, 1835; and Ferdinand Christian Baur, founder of the Tübingen School of Critics, active with his pen from 1831 to 1853.

² Joseph Erneste Renan, in *La Vie de Jesus*, 1863.

xvi. 12), "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." No teacher can do his best work save with those pupils who are capable of appreciating him; and no pupil can correctly report a teacher unless the pupil is capable of understanding all that the teacher has said. In most cases that which is not understood is not reported. Eminence cannot be portrayed by mediocrity. A divine being described by men must be reduced in proportions to the point of human comprehension. Perspective foreshortens; distance belittles. Divinity alone can comprehend divinity. The apostles were but men; much, therefore, of the noblest, best, most spiritual in a revelation of the Divine they could not observe, and consequently must necessarily have failed to report.

Some men approach the New Testament with a foregone conclusion against the supernatural. Miracles they account for by the tendency to invent and enlarge. But it is just as scientific a postulate to assume that everything recorded has been toned down and reduced in dimensions to suit the capacity of the witnesses. Indeed, neither attitude of mind is sound and scientific. The one tendency may be an offset to the other. To recognize both will enable

the investigator in a good measure to avoid both. He must be open to conviction. He must look for evidence, and must weigh not the testimony alone, but the witnesses who give it, considering their chronological relations to the facts reported, their ability to comprehend, their disposition to thrust themselves forward or to keep their themes uppermost, and their tendency to modify the record either by subtraction or addition.

CHAPTER XII.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES. — ARE THE GOSPELS HISTORIC DOCUMENTS ?

WE must determine in what light we will look at the New Testament record. Were the Gospels written, as other documents have been written, by men who knew the subjects about which they wrote ; and, because knowing them, were thereby qualified to write ? In other words, before rightly studying the New Testament, we must fix in some measure our idea of inspiration, at least defining it on the negative side, so as to distinguish it from some obviously faulty notions recently — and, unfortunately, in many places still — current.

If one idea of inspiration were to prevail, it would be unnecessary for us to undertake to treat the documents as historic, written in antiquity, near the time of the events described, and by men fully acquainted with those events. Indeed, it would be folly ; for, if God has made known to men precisely what to write, it is immaterial when they write, whether one day, one year, or one thousand years after the event.

The omniscience of God can as easily bridge a wide as a narrow chasm; and it would be idle to measure the chasm at all, to say nothing of measuring it down to the fine gradations of the most careful instruments with which modern scholarship is equipped. If God dictated the New Testament, and the record is fully his, it would make no difference whatever whether Tacitus and Pliny and Suetonius and Lucian alluded to Christ, or not. God needs no such corroborative testimony. It would be little short of blasphemous to try to substantiate *his* statements by such puny witnesses. Grant the extreme view of inspiration, and the investigation of manuscripts and monuments and authorities is useless, our whole inquiry as to *sources* is vain. There is practically but one source, God.

I refer to the mechanical, or verbal, theory of inspiration. This theory, in its extreme form, held that God took complete possession of a man, and made him write divine thoughts in language chosen in every particular by the divine mind, just as now I make my pen obey me and write what I will.¹ But if this theory

¹ Rev. Washington Gladden, *Who Wrote the Bible?* p. 49, says, "It seems to me that the advocacy of the verbal theory of inspiration comes perilously near to the sin against the Holy Ghost."

were a true explanation of the relation which God holds to the New Testament and its writers, a relation which we are pleased to call inspiration, let us see what we might then reasonably expect to follow.

1. If equally inspired, the Gospels would be either alike, each exactly duplicating the others, or supplementary each to the others, like the chapters of a book in literary sequence. In either case there would be but one Gospel, where now we have four: for, if they were alike, they would be but one Gospel, four times repeated; and, if they were in sequence, they would then be but one Gospel, four times as long as now. On the theory that nothing was duplicated, Andreas Osiander, one of the reformers, constructed a harmony of the Gospels by stringing out the events of Christ's life and speech, as recorded in the four accounts, one after the other, without recognizing them in any manner as parallel.¹

¹ Published in 1537. Dr. Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, vol. vi., p. 570, says, Osiander "published a mechanical Gospel harmony at the request of Archbishop Cranmer, who had married his niece." Professor Weiss, *The Life of Christ*, English translation, p. 20, holds this harmony of Osiander up to good-natured ridicule. "Even to the Württemberg prelate, Bengel, the miracle that Jesus wrought upon the mother-in-law of Peter appeared greater if lasting health followed it, than if she had still required to have one or two relapses, in order to be able to make two or three out of one miraculous cure."

2. Divine inspiration in penning, of this mechanical sort, is worthless unless it be followed by an equally divine supervision, of the same mechanical sort, in copying, preserving, translating, and interpreting. Such inspiration in ancient time would be absolutely worthless for us to-day without this complete supervision for the transmission to us of the record. Every generation would require its own revelation, unless such supervision were guaranteed. Every scribe who ever made a copy would need as much inspiration as the original writer; and in the time of printing the whole would be vitiated, unless every typesetter and every pressman and every proof-reader and every corrector were also supernaturally guarded from error. How could any, save Christians, in any manner have anything to do either with the reproduction or dissemination of the Scriptures, and they, too, of the most spiritual kind of Christians, without completely destroying the divine value? Indeed, an inspiration of the kind referred to would be worthless for the reader unless he were inspired to understand, and were miraculously guarded from misinterpretation. And then we might expect that the supervision which would guard the interpretation would modify the individualities of men, causing

all who read the Scriptures to see and understand exactly alike.

3. Had the method of inspiration been verbal, we might reasonably expect that those critical problems now so perplexing to the student of the New Testament would be totally unknown. There would have been no unlikeness between the Fourth Gospel and the other three, no apparent discrepancies in narrative or event. The peculiarities of individuals would be wanting. The teaching of the apostles, in preaching and epistle, which is called "Christ's Gospel," would not confront us as something either involved in the words of Jesus, unrecorded, or suggested by the Holy Spirit to his followers after the ascension. This apostolic teaching emphasizes four points not made prominent, if indeed recorded, in the Gospels: (1) the expiatory significance of Christ's death as a basis for the believer's acceptance with God, i. e., the atonement; (2) the abiding communion with Christ through the Holy Spirit, which gives its possessor a new spiritual life; (3) the resurrection of Christ as a proof of our resurrection; and (4) Christ's return as the time for completing his work of salvation. These things are plainly taught in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles. They are very

obscure in the Gospels, if indeed they are there at all. On the theory of verbal inspiration, the omission of these principles from the account of Christ's teaching is inexplicable. They are fundamental, cardinal doctrines in Paul's theology. But another view of inspiration recognizes progress among the disciples of Jesus in their reception of truth, remembers the words of Jesus that the Holy Spirit should be given the disciples in order to call to their remembrance what the Master had said unto them and to lead them into all truth, and notes the confession of Jesus that he had many things which he could not say unto them then because they lacked at that time capacity to appreciate. A theory such as this can discern the essential harmony in the midst of differences in the Bible.

4. If the theory of verbal inspiration were true, then an investigation into the antiquity of a document, and the relation of its author to the facts recorded, would be useless. By verbal inspiration a man of to-day could just as well write a life of Jesus as could one of his apostles or any other contemporary.

5. If the theory of verbal inspiration were true, then the motive for writing would have been from God, and not from the man himself.¹

¹ See Weiss' *The Life of Christ*, English Translation, vol. i., p. 20.

John does not speak of the Holy Spirit compelling him to write when he gives his reasons for writing (xx. 31): "But these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." In another place John lays stress, not upon what the Holy Spirit had communicated, but upon what he himself had seen, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the father), full of grace and truth" (i. 14);¹ and in another place the truthfulness of his testimony is declared on the ground of his having personally witnessed what he relates: "And he that hath seen hath borne witness, and his witness is true: and we know that he saith true, that ye also may believe" (xix. 35). The confirmation appended to his Gospel recognizes the writer's truthfulness in the same terms: "This is the disciple which beareth witness of these things and wrote these things: and we know that his witness is true" (xxi. 24). Luke still more explicitly refers to his literary motive, and puts his attempt upon exactly the same basis as other literary ventures, which, because lost, show that the Holy Spirit, if given to them,

¹ Cf. 1 John i. 1.

was in them not effectual for a permanent revelation to the world. Luke says (i. 1-4), "Forasmuch as many have taken in hand to draw up a narrative concerning those matters which have been fulfilled among us, even as they delivered them unto us, which from the beginning were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word, it seemed good to me also, having traced the course of all things accurately from the first, to write unto thee in order, most excellent Theophilus, that thou mightest know the certainty concerning the things wherein thou wast instructed."

We cannot, therefore, look upon our sources in the light of that mechanical, or verbal, theory of inspiration. Nor does it now concern us immediately to construct another theory. Definition may well wait upon investigation. We have already seen from uninspired sources, the heathen and the Jewish testimonies to the life of Jesus, that Jesus Christ actually lived at the beginning of our era, when Tiberius was emperor at Rome and Pontius Pilate was procurator of Judea; we have seen that this personage, Jesus Christ, was crucified as a malefactor, and yet that, after this ignominious death, his teaching and influence survived so powerfully that everywhere the numbers increased of men

who spoke his name in reverence, imitated his example, and, assured of a future life, preferred to die for him rather than in any measure to renounce his mastership over them in this life. The institutions which have grown up in his name — indeed, all the events in history since his time — indicate the entrance of a more than human life into the world when this Christ came amongst men. We do not need, then, a theory of inspiration to prove to us the fact of Christ's life. Let us, therefore, for the present be content to approach the record containing the details of that life without any theory. Let us look at the record in a purely historical spirit, and treat it as any other historical material. Let us see if it will stand this test, and then vindicate to us its essential truthfulness, and at length disclose to us the correct idea of inspiration. Whence should we derive our notions of inspiration, if not from the Bible? Should we not draw our theory from it, rather than take our theory to it?¹

¹ See Professor George T. Ladd's *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, vol. i., p. 370, and chaps. v.-vii., pp. 452-494; Rev. R. F. Horton's *Inspiration and the Bible*; and Rev. C. J. Vaughan's *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Appendix I., pp. 311-316.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE GOSPELS; THE TIME OF THEIR COMPOSITION.

IN the historical spirit our first inquiries concerning the Gospels would naturally relate to the time of their origin: when were they written? was it at a time in close connection with the events described? and do the authors write from personal knowledge or from hearsay?

The New Testament which we use to-day was used, practically as we use it, by Luther and Wickliffe and Augustine and Chrysostom. It would not be necessary, indeed it would be tedious, to cite all the witnesses for the existence of the Gospels through all the centuries behind us. But from the fourth century backward the number is smaller. We will examine a chain of these back to the time of the apostles.

Jerome, in the introduction to his Commentary on Matthew, and also in the preface to the Vulgate Version of the New Testament ad-

dressed to Pope Damasus in A.D. 383, mentions the four Gospels by name, and, with reference to Ezek. i. 10 and x. 14, maintains that four is the divinely appointed number.

Epiphanius, who died in A.D. 403, in his *Panarium* (Bk. II., chap. i.) describes the four Gospels, and explicitly states that they are all.

Eusebius, rightly termed "The Father of Church History," in his history,¹ which he brings down to A.D. 324, enumerates among the canonical books of the New Testament our four Gospels.

A century before Eusebius, Origen of Alexandria distinguishes three classes of New Testament writings; authentic, spurious, and a middle class in regard to which he is in doubt. The four Gospels which we now possess are mentioned among the undoubtedly genuine books.²

In 1740, an Italian named Muratori found in the Ambrosian Library at Milan a manuscript

¹ Bk. III., chap. xxiv., xxv.; Bk. VI., chap. xiv.

² Origen died about A.D. 254. He gives no formal list, but the classification is gathered from his works. He wrote commentaries, not now extant, on Matthew, Luke, and John. He cites Matthew in *De Principiis*, Bk. I., chap. ii., § 8; Luke in *Against Celsus*, Bk. I., chap. lxiii.; John in *De Principiis*, Bk. I., chap. i., § 1, chap. ii., § 3, chap. vi., § 2, and chap. vii., § 1; "the Gospels" in *De Principiis*, Bk. II., chap. iv., § 1, 2; and "the New Testament" in *De Principiis*, Bk. I., chap. ii., § 8.

of the seventh or eighth century in Latin, but evidently a translation of a Greek document written between A.D. 160 and A.D. 170, as a statement that it was written in the time of Pius indicates. This document gives a list of the writings belonging to the New Testament. It is called, therefore, the Muratorian Canon.¹ It begins in the middle of a sentence evidently referring to Mark, and then speaks of Luke as occupying the *third* place in the collection, and then describes the Gospel of John. It therefore practically gives evidence to the existence of the *four* Gospels. That Luke is the third, and Mark has been already mentioned, obviously points to one preceding Mark, which we can safely assume to be our Matthew.

Clement of Alexandria, who wrote during the reign of the Emperor Severus, that is, in A.D. 193 to A.D. 211, regards our four Gospels as canonical.²

Tertullian, who was born about A.D. 150, and

¹ See Westcott's *History of the Canon of the New Testament*, p. 211 *sq.*, and Appendix C, pp. 521-538; Charteris' *Canonicity*, pp. lxxix-lxxx.

² His testimony in regard to the origin of the Gospels of Mark and John is preserved by Eusebius (*Church History*, Bk. VI., chap. 14) from Clement's *Hypotyposes*, now lost. He quotes Matthew and Luke in *Stromata*, Bk. I., chap. xxi. In *Stromata*, Bk. III., chap. xiii., however, he quotes a saying which he says is not in the *four* Gospels handed down to us, but in the one according to the Egyptians.

died after A.D. 208, recognizes the four Gospels as in the canon already established.¹

Irenæus, who became bishop of Lyons in A.D. 177, does the same. In his treatise, *Against Heresies*,² he says, "It is not possible that the Gospels can be either more or fewer in number than they are. For since there are four zones of the world in which we live, and four principal winds, while the church is scattered throughout the world, and the 'pillar and ground' of the church is the Gospel and the spirit of life, it is fitting that she should have four pillars breathing out immortality on every side, and vivifying men afresh." And then the figures of a lion, a calf, a man, and an eagle, of Rev. iv. 7,³ are applied to our four Gospels.

We have now seen that in the fourth century, when Jerome and Epiphanius and Eusebius wrote; and in the third century, when Origen was active with his pen; and in the last quarter of the second, at the time of Clement of Alexandria and Tertullian and Irenæus, when, too, the Canon of Muratori was compiled, — the four Gospels have ample vindication. How much earlier did they exist?

¹ He mentions the authors by name as apostles and apostolic men, *Against Marcion*, Bk. IV., chap. ii.

² Bk. III., chap. xi., § 8, cf. chap. i., and chap. xi., § 7.

³ Cf. Ezek. i. 10; x. 14.

Tatian,¹ a pupil of Justin Martyr, made a continuous narrative out of our four Gospels in about A.D. 160, which bears the name *Diatessaron*. An Arabic manuscript of this work, obtained in Egypt, was printed in 1888 with a Latin translation, in honor of the jubilee of Pope Leo's priesthood. In 1894 a translation into English by Rev. J. Hamlyn Hill, B.D., was published under the title, *The Earliest Life of Christ ever Compiled from the Four Gospels*. Mr. Hill has designated this work rightly; it is a compilation from our four Gospels, and not a harmony, as often called, and at the early time of its composition proves the existence of the Gospels which we now regard as canonical, and practically of no others, for it seems to draw from no others.

Justin, who has been canonized as a saint, and is commonly known as Justin Martyr, in consequence of the violent death he is said to have suffered, was a pagan philosopher in Pales-

¹ See Professor Harnack, "Tatian," *Encyc. Brit.*, vol. xxiii., pp. 80, 81; Professor J. M. Fuller, "Tatianus," *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iv., pp. 783-804; Professor J. Rendel Harris, "Tatian and the Fourth Gospel," *Contemporary Review*, December, 1893, p. 800 sq. Walter R. Cassel in "The *Diatessaron* of Tatian," *Contemporary Review*, April, 1895, pp. 665-681, gives less value to the *Diatessaron* than do most critics, (1) because witnesses for it are late and few, Eusebius being the first to mention it; and (2) because at the time of its composition, set by Cassel at A.D. 175-180, Tatian, a heretic, would readily have used Gospels not long existing, and not widely sanctioned by the church.

tine in the time of Antoninus Pius, studying in the various schools of philosophy for some knowledge which would satisfy the cravings of his soul. "At last he became acquainted with Christianity, being at once impressed with the extraordinary fearlessness which the Christians displayed in the presence of death, and with the grandeur, stability, and truth of the teachings of the Old Testament. From this time he acted as an evangelist, taking every opportunity to proclaim the Gospel as the only safe and certain philosophy, the only way to salvation."¹ Among many writings from Justin's pen three of special importance are now at hand: two *Apologies*, one addressed to Antoninus Pius, the emperor, and through him to his sons and the Roman senate and the whole Roman people, the other addressed directly to the Roman senate, and a lengthy *Dialogue with Trypho*, a Jew, whom Justin tries to convince of the appearance of the Messiah in Jesus, and of the reality of Christianity. Justin composed these works in the decade between A.D. 140 and A.D. 150. In them he repeatedly quotes from documents which he calls "the memoirs of the Apostles."²

¹ From introduction by Drs. Dods and Reith, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Christian Lit. Co.), vol. i., p. 160.

² *Apology* I, chap. lxvi., *Dialogue* c., ci., ciii., cv., cvii, *et passim*.

These quotations, all scholars have for a long time agreed, referred to our first three Gospels; and in consequence of the very able work of the late Ezra Abbot,¹ the Fourth Gospel is also recognized, with almost equal unanimity, as included in the citations.

Papias is the next witness of importance to summon. He died in A.D. 163, and must have written at about the time that Justin Martyr did.² He is known to us only through other Fathers who quote him. He wrote *An Exposition of the Oracles of Our Lord*,³ supposed to refer to our Gospels, though not enough is known concerning the work to establish clearly its character. As quoted by Eusebius, Papias bears testimony to the Gospels of Matthew and Mark, and relates how they were composed, the former in Hebrew, the latter to preserve the

¹ *Critical Essays*, "The Authorship of the Fourth Gospel," pp. 9-112; also *The Fourth Gospel*, by Abbot, Peabody, and Lightfoot, pp. 3-106. Wilhelm Bousset, 1891, *Die Evangeliencitate Justins des Märtyrers in ihrem Wert für die Evangelienkritik*, reviewed in *The Critical Review*, vol. i., p. 260, accepts it as established that Justin used our four Gospels, and attempts to show only that he used an earlier one now lost. A writer in *The Saturday Review* (London), Jan. 11, 1890, in reviewing Rev. Dr. G. T. Purves's lectures before Princeton Theological Seminary on "The Testimony of Justin Martyr to Early Christianity," said, "Dr. Purves maintains, what few people now doubt, that Justin used all our four Gospels."

² See Donaldson's *The Apostolical Fathers*, chap. vi., pp. 393-402.

³ Λογίων κυριακῶν ἐξηγησις.

reminiscences of Peter. Papias shows that at his time living tradition was still available, and to him was more satisfactory even than written sources. Before his time, therefore, we cannot expect to find abundant testimony to the written sources, for eye-witnesses are still at hand and are preferred.

This is what Papias says : " If, then, any one came, who had been a follower of the elders, I questioned him in regard to the words of the elders, — what Andrew or what Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the disciples of the Lord, and what things Aristion and the presbyter John say. For I did not think that what was to be gotten from the books would profit me as much as what came from the living and abiding voice."¹

That he refers to books in comparison with oral testimony upon subjects which came directly from the apostles shows that books with similar contents and purports were already in existence at his time. And yet his preference for the oral testimony, when derived directly from apostolic source, indicates a historical

¹ McGiffert's translation, *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, 2d series, vol. i., "Eusebius," p. 171.

spirit¹ which placed value upon writings and sayings, not as the utterances of men whose reliability is assured only by a dogma concerning inspiration, but of men who were in sufficiently close contact with the deeds and sayings reported to know the accuracy of them through human means.

From the period before Papias, there survive the testimony of *The Shepherd of Hermas*, the epistle bearing the name of *Barnabas*, the epistles of *Polycarp* and *Ignatius*, the so-called *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, and the epistle of *Clement* of Rome.

Origen, in his commentary on Romans, conjectured² that the Hermas saluted by Paul in the sixteenth chapter of his epistle to the Romans is the author of *The Shepherd of Hermas*. Many have followed Origen in this conjecture. But there is no evidence whatever in support of this claim, its only basis being the likeness of names ; and all the probabilities are against it. The most certain data for determining the time of composition are given by

¹ This historical spirit is not shared by all the writers of that day. See Ladd's *Doctrine of Sacred Scripture*, vol. ii., p. 79; Westcott's *Introduction*, Appendix B.

² Origen states it simply as a conjecture. He says, "I fancy that that Hermas is the author of the tract which is called the *Shepherd*, a writing which seems to me to be very useful, and is, as I fancy, divinely inspired."

the Muratorian Canon, which says, "Hermas composed the *Shepherd* very lately, in our times in the city of Rome, while the Bishop Pius, his brother, occupied the chair of the Roman church." The episcopate of Pius was A.D. 141–156, and hence the date of composition can be easily set as about the middle of the second century. This is the date usually accepted.¹

The *Shepherd* contains no quotations either from the Old Testament or the New; and this, said Bishop Lightfoot,² is because of its devotional character. The only direct quotation is from an apocryphal work, which is cited as holy scripture: "The Lord is nigh unto them who return to him, as it is written in Eldad and Modat, who prophesied to the people in the wilderness," — a work no longer extant. But the *Shepherd* contains similarities and allusions to New Testament expressions, particularly to those in the Epistle of James and the Book of Revelation.³

¹ So Holtzmann, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, p. 111; Credner, *Geschichte des Neue-Testamentlichen Kanons*, pp. 37, 42; *Supernatural Religion*, vol. i., p. 253; Dr. Doellinger set the date between 130 and 150 A.D., and in a private letter to Archdeacon Watkins (*Bampton Lectures*, 1890, p. 45) said, "This is also the prevailing and best supported opinion among German theologians, both Catholic and Protestant."

² *Essays on Supernatural Religion*, p. 271.

³ Holtzmann (*Einleitung*, p. 111) adds also 1 Cor., Eph., and "probably" Heb., 1 Pet., and Mark.

But the most important contribution to our subject which the *Shepherd* affords has recently been pointed out by Dr. C. Taylor, Master of St. John's College, Cambridge, England.¹ In my account of this document in Chapter IX., I stated that in the third and last vision the woman, who represented the church, was seated upon a bench with four legs, which became the permanent possession of the church. Dr. Taylor asks, with great pertinence, If the chair is the seat of authority under the old dispensation, what can the new bench, which stands on four feet, signify but the fourfold Gospel? This question he answers in the affirmative, and arrays many considerations in support of his position, the chief of which perhaps is the suggestion that Irenæus, in stating so emphatically the necessity of four Gospels and of four only, is but re-echoing the sentiment of Hermas. This explanation of the significance of the four-legged bench has been received with general assent since it was first propounded.²

The document known as *The Epistle of Barnabas* has itself been looked upon as of apostolic origin and sacred character, and has

¹ *The Witness of Hermas to the Four Gospels*, London, 1892.

² See Professor Marcus Dods, *The Expositor*, September, 1892, p. 229 *sq.*; Dr. A. Plummer, *The Thinker*, January, 1893, p. 62 *sq.*; Dr. John Massie, *The Critical Review*, vol. ii. (1892), p. 373 *sq.*

even found a place in the canon of the New Testament. Jerome¹ puts it among the apocryphal books; Eusebius² speaks of it as among the rejected writings; Origen³ quotes it without expressing a judgment as to its authenticity; while Codex Sinaiticus, one of our oldest New Testament manuscripts, has it appended to the New Testament books, as though belonging in the same category. This uncertainty in regard to its place in the canon is due to uncertainty in regard to its authorship. By many it was supposed to have been written by the companion of Paul, but this by internal evidence can now be shown impossible. Its author must have been either some other Barnabas, or some one who employed that name to give authority to his work. It seeks to make evident the superiority of the new over the old dispensation. It could not have been written earlier than A.D. 70, nor later than A.D. 132. Its probable date is A.D. 119. It frequently shows a familiarity with New Testament thought, and yet does not quote the Gospels save in one place,⁴ where the expression, "There be many

¹ *De Viris Illustribus*, chap. vi.

² *Church History*, Bk. III., chap. xxv.

³ *De Principiis*, Bk. III., chap. ii., and *Against Celsus*, Bk. I., chap. lxiii.

⁴ Chap. iv., at end.

called, but few chosen " (Matt. xxii. 14), is introduced by "as it is written,"¹ a phrase which at that time was recognized as the technical form for introducing a saying from the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Now, we know in what esteem the writings of the Old Testament were held by men of the first and second centuries. If, therefore, the writer of this epistle introduces a saying from the New Testament with the same expression which he and others of his day have habitually employed in citing the words of their acknowledged Scripture, it is evident that a similar respect is now paid to the document which contains this Matthew quotation.

Polycarp² of Smyrna wrote an epistle to the church in Philippi which can be dated as immediately following the martyrdom of Ignatius, and this very plainly occurred either in A.D. 108 or A.D. 115.³ Polycarp's epistle, though brief, contains between thirty and forty decisive coincidences with, or references to, passages in the New Testament. And among these are several

¹ ὡς γέγραπται. See Donaldson's *The Apostolical Fathers*, p. 306.

² See Lightfoot's *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part II., vol. i., pp. 433-722; vol. ii., § II., pp. 311-506.

³ Lightfoot, *The Apostolic Fathers*, Part II., vol. i., p. 30; Canon R. Travers Smith, *Dictionary of Christian Biography*, vol. iii., p. 220.

unmistakable quotations from the Gospels; for example, in chap. ii., near the end, are these words, "remembering what the Lord has taught us, saying, 'Judge not, and ye shall not be judged; forgive, and ye shall be forgiven. Be ye merciful and ye shall obtain mercy :¹ for with the same measure that ye mete withal, it shall be measured to you again.' And again, 'Blessed are the poor, and they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of God.'" ²

Polycarp is, however, a much more important witness than merely what he cites in his epistle would indicate. The late Bishop Lightfoot said,³ Polycarp "is the most important person in the history of the Christian church during the ages immediately succeeding the apostles." This characterization is owing to the peculiar relation in which Polycarp stood to those who went before him and to those who followed after; for he was the teacher of Irenæus, and, according to Irenæus, was himself the pupil of St. John. Bishop Westcott says,⁴ "In one respect the testimony of Polycarp is more important than that of any other of the apostolic

¹ Cf. Matt. vii. 1; Luke vi. 37, 38.

² Cf. Matt. v. 3, 10; Luke vi. 20.

³ *Essays in Reply to Supernatural Religion*, p. 89.

⁴ *On the Canon*, p. 40.

Fathers. Like his master, he lived to unite two ages. He had listened to St. John, and he became himself the teacher of Irenæus."

Eusebius preserves¹ a portion of a lost treatise by Irenæus written to an old schoolmate, Florinus, who seems to Irenæus heretical because regarding God as the author of evil. Irenæus reminds Florinus of their early instruction, which was contrary to the teachings now promulgated. "While I was yet a boy," he says, "I saw thee in Lower Asia with Polycarp, distinguishing thyself in the royal court, and endeavoring to gain his approbation. For I have a more vivid recollection of what occurred at that time than of recent events (inasmuch as the experiences of childhood, keeping pace with the growth of the soul, become incorporated with it); so that I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse — his going out, too, and his coming in; his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he would call their words to remembrance. Whatsoever things

¹ *Church History*, Bk. V., chap. xx.

he had heard from them respecting the Lord, both with regard to his miracles and his teaching, Polycarp having thus received (information) from the eye-witnesses of the Word of Life, would recount them all in harmony with the Scriptures." Irenæus further says of him,¹ "But Polycarp also was not only instructed by apostles, and conversed with many who had seen Christ, but was also, by apostles in Asia, appointed bishop of the church in Smyrna, whom I also saw in my early youth, for he tarried (on earth) a very long time, and when a very old man, gloriously and most nobly suffered martyrdom, departed this life, having always taught the things which he had learned from the apostles, and which the church has handed down, and which alone are true."

This line of personal discipleship is very important and very conclusive. The Irenæus who remembers so distinctly the sayings of his master Polycarp, and *his* sayings concerning his master John, is the Irenæus who employs the four Gospels which we employ, and cites them as long existing and established for the church.² Especially significant is his testimony to the Fourth Gospel, for it is well-nigh inconceivable

¹ *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. iii., § 4.

² See above, p. 128.

that Irenæus could have given credence to the Fourth Gospel as the work of the apostle John, if he had not known conclusively from Polycarp that the Gospel beyond question had come from John. In an important degree the testimony of Irenæus must be regarded as sanctioned and indorsed by Polycarp.

In a life of Polycarp, written considerably after his time,¹ occurs the statement, put upon his lips, when asked to recant his Christian profession: ² "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?" This was spoken at the time of his martyrdom, which took place in A.D. 155. If by eighty-six years of service he means his whole lifetime, it would carry his birth back to A.D. 69, and make him about thirty years old when the apostle John died, for Irenæus says ³ John was living in Ephesus when Trajan came to the throne, which was in A.D. 98. If, however, Polycarp means that eighty-six years had elapsed since the time of his conversion, it would make him a very old man, to be sure, —

¹ It has been dated in the second half of the second century, but undoubtedly belongs to a later period. Eusebius (*Church History*), Bk. IV., chap. xv) quotes it extensively.

² *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, chap. ix.

³ *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. iii., § 4.

yet not impossibly or unreasonably aged, assuming his conversion to have taken place at from twelve to twenty years of age. Then he might have died at the age of one hundred years, or more, and have been nearly fifty years old when John died.

In whatever way this last reference to Polycarp is understood, whether it is received as genuine or not, we can nevertheless see that the position of Polycarp is most important, and the testimony of Irenæus, reaching back through Polycarp, is one of our most direct and conclusive pieces of testimony out of the apostolic period.

Over the name and reputed writings of Ignatius a great critical battle has been waging since 1495. Fifteen epistles then were known associated with the name of Ignatius. In a short time three, at least, of these were discovered to be spurious, leaving twelve still accredited to Ignatius. About a century and a half later, however (1644), new manuscripts were brought to light, which contained but seven epistles, and these in briefer form than the corresponding epistles already known. Now the battle, which had raged about the simple question, Are the twelve epistles genuine, or are they not? waxed hotter and more uncertain

over the perplexities of determining which were the earlier of the rival forms, and whether any of them were genuine. Gradually the smoke was lifting, and decision was settling upon the shorter forms as genuine, when in 1845, after two full centuries, Syriac manuscripts of three of these epistles, in still briefer form, were discovered in the British Museum; and the whole question was reopened, with the added complication of determining what the short Syriac epistles represented. Keen minds have been busied with the problem. Lipsius, a German, and Lightfoot, an Englishman, both of whom at first pronounced for the genuineness of the shortest form, of which the Syriac epistles were translations, have during their further investigations changed their minds, and declared, as their ripest judgment, that the shorter of the Greek forms, seven in number, were the genuine epistles of Ignatius.¹

While as yet there is no absolute unanimity upon the subject, yet critical opinion gravitates to the decision of Lightfoot and Lipsius. I accept the seven short epistles as genuine, and consult them as witnesses for the existence of the New Testament in the time of

¹ The work of Bishop Lightfoot I commend as one of the best specimens of patient, exhaustive study with which I am acquainted.

Ignatius. Six of the seven are written to churches (at Magnesia, Tralles, Philadelphia, Ephesus, Smyrna, and Rome), and one to an individual, Polycarp. They were penned as Bishop Ignatius was on his way from Antioch, his own diocese, unto Rome to suffer martyrdom. He is in the custody of ten Roman soldiers, whom he terms "ten leopards."¹ His letters are what we might expect under such circumstances, brief, direct, full of fatherly council for churches which he will see no more. The one to Rome is a glowing appeal to be allowed without interposition to suffer the martyrdom to which he is going. None are treatises, or essays, in defence either of Christianity or of the Gospels. We should not, under such circumstances, at that early day, expect frequent, if indeed any, use of the New Testament language or reference to the New Testament books. And yet sufficient testimony to our Gospels is not wanting to make us certain that Ignatius was acquainted with at least the substance of the narrative which we possess. Besides numerous likenesses and allusions to the Gospels in all his epistles, in one² he says: "But your prayer to God shall make me per-

¹ To the *Romans*, chap. v.

² To the *Philadelphians*, chap. v.

fect, that I may attain to that portion which through mercy has been allotted to me, while I flee to the Gospel as to the flesh of Jesus, and to the apostles as to the presbytery of the church. And let us also love the prophets, because they, too, have proclaimed the Gospel, and placed their hope in Him, and waited for Him." While this language does not distinctly indicate a written Gospel, yet the use of "apostles" and "prophets" in close connection would certainly imply that as the prophets were, viz., written, so also the apostles and Gospels were.

But perhaps the strongest proof that Ignatius both knew and used our Gospels is to be found in his closeness of expression to them in so many places. Even a careless reading of the epistles will disclose these similarities. They are so numerous as to be more than coincidences. A coincidence may happen once, or even twice, but it cannot repeat itself without indicating more than chance.

I must mention *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* next. This document, hidden in a volume of ancient writings in the library of the Jerusalem Monastery in Constantinople, was discovered by Philotheos Bryennios in 1873; but, busied with the other documents in the volume, Bryennios did not recognize the

importance of the one entitled *Διδαχὴ τῶν δώδεκα ἀποστόλων* until 1878. Then he worked assiduously upon the text and its criticism, and published it to the world in December, 1883. In the short time since, it has received marked attention.

It is undoubtedly of early date, although scholars cannot agree upon the precise date to assign to it. They vary between A. D. 50 and A. D. 190. But the majority hold to about A. D. 100. This document has several passages closely resembling our Gospels. Two ways are described :¹ "Now the way of Life is this : First, thou shalt love God who made thee ; secondly, thy neighbor as thyself ;² and all things whatsoever thou wouldst not have done to thee, neither do thou to another."³ Now, the teaching of these words is this : Bless those who curse you,⁴ and pray for your enemies, and fast for those who persecute you ; for what thank is there if ye love those who love you ? Do not even the Gentiles the same ?⁵ But love ye those who hate you, and ye shall not have an enemy. Abstain from fleshly and bodily lusts. If any one give thee a blow on the right

¹ Chap. i., §§ 2, 3, 4.

² Cf. Matt. xxii. 37, 39.

³ *Ibid.*, vii. 12 ; Luke vi. 31. ⁴ *Ibid.*, v. 48 ; Luke vi. 27, 28.

⁵ *Ibid.*, v. 46 ; Luke vi. 32.

cheek, turn to him the other also,¹ and thou shalt be perfect.² If any one press thee to go with him one mile, go with him two;³ if any one take away thy cloak, give him also thy tunic; if any one take from thee what is thine, ask it not back, as indeed thou canst not." . . . "Neither pray ye as the hypocrites, but as the Lord commanded in his Gospel, so pray ye: Our⁴ Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, as in heaven, so on earth. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debt as we also forgive our debtors. And bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil. For thine is the power and the glory forever."⁵ While this document, then, makes no citation by name from the Gospels, yet these verbal likenesses are so close as certainly to indicate acquaintance with some written source.

One more document remains for us to examine. It is *The Epistle of Clement*, bishop of Rome, written to the Christian church at Corinth, an epistle clearly authenticated as genuine. The date of its composition is well established as following closely the Domitian

1 Cf. Matt. v. 39; Luke vi. 29.

2 *Ibid.*, v. 48; xix. 21.

3 *Ibid.*, v. 41.

4 *Ibid.*, vi. 9-13.

5 Chap. viii., § 2.

persecution, which took place in A. D. 96. Its testimony comes to us, therefore, from the first century, a year or two perhaps before the Fourth Gospel was written. We cannot expect this document, at that early time, written as a mere letter of advice and exhortation to the Corinthians, who had appealed to the Christians at Rome for counsel in the time of a trouble over an unruly member, to give clear and unmistakable evidence to the existence and use of the New Testament writings. At this time, when companions of the apostles and even an apostle himself is alive, we cannot hope to find references to written documents. The preferences for oral testimony, expressed by Papias, we can expect to be still stronger at this period. And yet the following words are found in *Clement*:¹ “Above all, remembering the words of the Lord Jesus, which he spake concerning equity and long-suffering, saying, Be ye merciful, and ye shall obtain mercy; forgive and ye shall be forgiven; as ye do, so shall it be done unto you; as ye give, so shall it be given unto you; as ye judge, so shall ye be judged; as ye are kind to others, so shall God be kind to you; with what measure ye mete, with the same shall it be measured to

¹ Chap. xiii.

you again. By this command, and by these rules, let us establish ourselves, that so we may always walk obediently to his holy words, being humble-minded."

These are not the exact words of Scripture, and yet so nearly resemble Luke vi. 36, 37; Matt. v. 7, vi. 14, vii. 2, 12, Mark; iv. 24, xi. 25; and Luke vi. 31, 38, as to convince us that, if not taken from the Gospels as a written source, they yet must have been derived from an oral gospel spoken by men before the written Gospels took form. Another passage of the same character occurs:¹ "Remember the words of our Lord Jesus, how he said, Woe to that man! It were better for him that he had never been born, than that he should have offended one of my elect. It were better for him that a millstone should be tied about his neck, and he should be cast into the sea, than that he should offend one of my little ones." This is very like Matt. xviii. 6 (Mark ix. 42; Luke xvii. 1, 2), combined with Matt. xxvi. 24 (Mark xiv. 21; Luke xxii. 22), and certifies, like the previously mentioned passage, to the contents of our Gospels, if not to the Gospels themselves.

In giving this running review of the external

¹ In chap. xlvii.

evidence for the authenticity of our Gospels, through a line of witnesses from Jerome back to Clement of Rome, I have by no means exhausted the list of witnesses who might be summoned to the stand. I have said nothing about Theophilus of Antioch, or Dionysius of Corinth, or Athenagoras of Athens, or Melito of Sardis; nothing concerning the testimony of the heretical writers Basilides, Valentinus, Menander, and Cerinthus, — yet all these used our Gospels; nothing about the early versions, the Peshitto, belonging to the latter half of the second century, and the Old Latin, used by Tertullian, and hence earlier than A.D. 170, — yet these contain our Gospels. But I have given the most important witnesses, and the evidence is sufficient for proof before any candid court. Did Jesus Christ live? Yes, and lived doubtless in all essential characteristics as the four Gospels of the New Testament relate, for they have all the vindication needful as first century documents.

We have consequently reached a conclusion which the apostles John and Luke emphasized, the importance of eye- and ear-witnesses. John says, "The Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory" (i. 14), and repeats in his epistle even more specifically,

“That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our eyes, that which we beheld, and our hands handled, concerning the Word of life (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and bear witness, and declare unto you the life, the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested unto us)” (1 John i. 1, 2). Luke is careful to state that he relies upon those who were “eye-witnesses and ministers of the word” from the beginning. Obviously, therefore, we can use the four Gospels as historical witnesses, trustworthy because vindicated by an historical inquiry. They were written at a time, and by men, close to the events described.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES. — THE SYNOPTIC PROBLEM.

BEFORE examining in detail the contents of the Gospels, we must consider their mutual relations. The first three resemble each other very closely in many particulars. The fourth is distinct. The first three agree largely in the matter narrated, in the order of narration, and even in the language employed. Because of this agreement, the three Gospels have been called, since the time of Griesbach (who first used the term in his critical edition of the New Testament, 1774–1775), “the Synoptical Gospels,” or “the Synoptics.”¹

Of the Synoptic Problem, Professor Sanday says,² “I doubt if in the whole range of literature there is another question which involves data so complicated, so minute, and to all appearances so inexplicable.” The problem may

¹ σύν — ὁπτικός, from ὅψις, ὁψομαι ; to see together, i.e., a common view.

² *The Expositor*, 4th series, vol. iii., p. 88.

be discovered in the following table, given by Bishop Westcott :¹ —

If the contents of each Gospel be represented by 100, —

Mark will have 7 peculiarities and 93 coincidences ;

Matthew will have 42 peculiarities and 58 coincidences ;

Luke will have 59 peculiarities and 41 coincidences.

From this table it will be seen that Mark has very little that is peculiar to itself, but ninety-three per cent of its matter is reproduced either in Matthew or Luke, while these latter Gospels have nearly half of their contents in each case peculiar, and a half repeated in the two others. The coincidences are striking. They extend even to identity of language, in some cases seeming trivial.

These likenesses are interrupted by dissimilarities, by changed order, by omissions, and by insertions, oftentimes, too, seeming trivial. Verbal agreements are most common in the reputed sayings of others, especially the sayings of Jesus.

It has always been a problem to account for these resemblances and differences. Au-

¹ *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, p. 201.

gustine (born A.D. 354, died A.D. 430) offered the first solution.¹ He called Mark the abbreviator of Matthew. This view, with the addition that Luke made use of both Matthew and Mark, was the only explanation presented until 1785. In that year Lessing suggested that instead of using each other, they had all had recourse to some previously existing document. This view received many modifications. Eichhorn required five original documents to account for the peculiarities. Bishop Marsh deemed eight necessary ; and even ten have been supposed.

Neither of these first theories is free from serious, if not fatal, objections. The theory of dependence, applied in any one of its six possible forms, all of which have found supporters,² still fails to account for the arbitrariness of the later writers in dealing with the products of their predecessors. The original-document theory is also unsatisfactory, because devoid of proof. It is an hypothesis without support. A supposition, seeming to have place in some minds, that nothing could appear in our Gospels save what had already been written, would oblige us to suppose original docu-

¹ In his *De Consensu Evangelistarum*, Bk. I., chap. ii., § 4. See *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, vol. vi., p. 78.

² See Dods's *Introduction to the New Testament*, p. 9.

ments for the original documents, and so to run back indefinitely and absurdly.¹

A third theory has been propounded. Bishop Westcott is its chief English exponent. Gieseler, in 1818, was its originator. This is the oral-gospel theory. It is that the oral form of preaching which the apostles adopted in their ministry took such fixed and definite shape as to be reproduced on manuscript when the apostles, or their associates, came to write.² This has weighty considerations in its favor, especially when combined with a modified form of one of the other views; for the Acts already show a definite form of narrative, especially as respecting Christ's passion and resurrection, taking shape on the lips of the apostles; and when men "preached Jesus," it is probable that they told the same chief sayings and deeds of his life with which they had become familiar in their mutual conferences and conversations while tarrying at Jerusalem. This would be perfectly natural to expect.

¹ Rushbrooke and Abbott, in *The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels*, find the original document in all that is common to the three Gospels. This they call "the triple tradition." See also Abbott, *Encyc. Brit.*, "Gospels," vol. x., pp. 780-813.

² G. Wetzel in 1883 set forth the view that Matthew delivered lectures upon the life of Jesus; his hearers took notes, on which Matthew catechized and corrected them, and so a common type of Gospel was fixed. See *Studia Biblica*, vol. i., 1885, p. 87.

These primitive sermons, or narratives, concerning our Lord, would naturally have been early committed to writing, as Luke in his preface implies. Our Gospels, because surviving, were doubtless the more complete and doubtless the later written; and hence their writers may have availed themselves both of the remembered oral tradition and also of the written documents. Luke's preface indicates that he was acquainted with both, but relied preferably upon the oral, that is, upon the testimony of eye-witnesses and ministers of the word.

The Synoptic problem has been made of late, largely in Germany, a purely literary problem; but it is as well, and indeed chiefly, an historical problem. By this I mean that the historic evidence in regard to the origin of the Gospels, rather than the present literary features, should be made the point of departure for an investigation of the difficulties. Since we accept the testimony of the early Fathers in establishing the authenticity of the writings, may we not also listen to what they say concerning the dates and the manner of composing the documents? It is certainly more scientific to heed the testimony of those who are in a better position to know the facts, even if we do not know the precise manner

in which they acquired their knowledge, than to reason upon probabilities when we ourselves are ignorant. The subjective convictions of modern scholarship are unquestionably more reliable than the mere dogmatic assertions of men of the second and third centuries; but men of that time were in the line of direct communications from the past centuries, from which students of to-day, however scholarly, are cut off; and when the witnesses of the past agree, or when one alone states what is intrinsically possible, such evidence surely merits greater credence than modern conjectures, however brilliant. We have reason to expect that in the historical evidence we shall discover the best key to the literary puzzle.

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. — That Luke wrote both the Gospel bearing his name and the Book of Acts is universally agreed.¹ They are addressed to a certain Theophilus; they have marked similarities in style;² they are attested

¹ "A conclusion," says Renan, "which has never been seriously disputed," *Les Apôtres*, p. 10.

² 1. The compound verbs in Luke and Acts are in the same proportion, and more common than in any other writings of the New Testament. 2. The author of each has a fondness for *αὐτὸς*; it occurs in Matthew three times, in Mark five times, in John three times, while in Luke twenty-four, and in Acts fifty-one times. 3. In Luke and Acts *ἀπας* occurs thirty-five times, and it occurs only nine times elsewhere in the entire New Testament. 4. *πορευσθαι* is in Luke forty-nine times and in Acts thirty-eight times, while it is rare elsewhere in the

in antiquity as from the same pen by Irenæus,¹ by Clement of Alexandria,² by Tertullian,³ and by Eusebius.⁴ The Book of Acts terminates abruptly with Paul's dwelling, during his Roman confinement, two whole years in a hired house. What befell Paul, how the object which brought him to Rome was attained, the effects of his teachings in the city, — themes toward which the narrative has been steadily tending, — all these are suddenly dropped uncompleted. No better explanation for the stopping of the narrative at this point has ever been proposed than that at this time there was nothing more to write, — that is, that the history was brought down to date, that the author intended continuing, but could never execute his plans. This, therefore, would make A.D. 63,⁵ or soon after, the date of

New Testament. 5. εἰπεῖν and λαλεῖν with πρὸς are almost exclusively in Luke and Acts; the former occurs only in John a few times, and the latter only in 1 Cor. xiv. 6; Heb. v. 5; xi. 18. 6. Luke and Acts have, also, in common these peculiarities: δὲ καὶ . . . καὶ αὐτός (αὐτοί); τὸ before interrogative sentences; δὲ omitted after μὲν οὖν; and Ἱερουσαλήμ preferred to Ἱεροσόλυμα. See Hackett on *Acts*, p. 13 sq.

¹ *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. xiv., § 1.

² *Stromata*, Bk. V.

³ *On Fasting*, chap. x.; *On Proscription of Heretics*, chap. xxii.; *On Baptism*, chap. x.

⁴ *Church History*, Bk. II., chap. xxii., § 6; Bk. III., chap. iv., § 6.

⁵ Professor Sanday, however, in *The Expositor*, February, 1896, p. 82, says, "I am convinced that the Acts was written after and not before A.D. 70;" but he confesses that in this he differs from Dr.

its composition, since Paul arrived in Rome in A.D. 61.

By Acts i. 1 it is evident that the Gospel preceded the history: "The former treatise have I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and to teach." The Gospel may, therefore, have been written as late as A.D. 63, immediately before the Acts. It is known that Luke was at Cæsarea with Paul probably the greater part, if not the whole, of Paul's detention there.¹ In these years it would have been natural for Luke to have gathered, in conversation with Paul, the material for his Gospel, consulting, also, the documents mentioned in his preface. The Gospel may, therefore, very probably have been written in the year A.D. 59 or A.D. 60, the years of the Cæsarean imprisonment. Between A.D. 59 and A.D. 63, at any rate, its composition seems obviously to fall.

Blass, author of a recent commentary on Acts. He bases his conclusion on the belief that Paul was dead when Luke wrote. But I think, with many others, this cannot be proved.

¹ He went up to Jerusalem when Paul was arrested, as the "we" in Acts xxi. 15-17 shows; and, although it is not mentioned that he accompanied Paul into his imprisonment at Cæsarea (Acts xxiii. 23, 33), or was with Paul at Cæsarea during the two years of the imprisonment (xxiv. 27), yet since he includes himself with Paul on leaving Cæsarea for Rome (xxvii. 1 *sq.*, "we"), it is strongly probable that he was one who enjoyed the comparative liberty of Paul at Cæsarea (xxiv. 23). See Westcott's *Introduction*, pp. 195-198; Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, "Luke, Gospel of," Div. II., p. 1696.

Ancient opinion tends strongly to establish this close connection between the apostle Paul and the Gospel of Luke. Irenæus says,¹ "Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him." This last pronoun seems to refer to Paul. Tertullian states :² "For even Luke's form of the Gospel men usually ascribe to Paul;" and in another place :³ "Luke, however, was not an apostle, but only an apostolic man ; not a master, but a disciple, and so inferior to a master—at least as far subsequent to him as the apostle whom he followed (and that no doubt was Paul) was subsequent to the others." Origen, as quoted by Eusebius,⁴ calls it "the Gospel praised by Paul." Eusebius himself⁵ explains Paul's reference to "my gospel," mentioned in 2 Tim. ii. 8, as meaning the Gospel of Luke.⁶ This tradition of connection with Paul may not mean quite as much as the Fathers state ; for Luke's

¹ *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. i., § 1.

² *Against Marcion*, Bk. IV., chap. v.

³ *Ibid.*, Bk. IV., chap. ii.

⁴ *Church History*, Bk. VI., chap. xxv.

⁵ *Ibid.*, Bk. III., chap. iv.

⁶ But doubtless Eusebius is mistaken in this. The passage reads : "Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, of the seed of David, according to my gospel;" and Weiss (Meyer's Commentary *in loc.*) points out that the following clause precludes this from referring to Luke : "*wherein* (ἐν ᾧ) I suffer hardship unto bonds, as a malefactor ; but the word of God is not bound."

preface indicates reliance chiefly upon eye and ear witnesses, which Paul, in the strictest sense, was not; and yet the general purport of the tradition has everything in its favor. The account of the institution of the Lord's Supper given by Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23-25) agrees verbally more nearly with Luke's account (xxii. 19, 20) than with that given by either of the other evangelists. A less obvious parallel between Luke xxiv. 26, 27, and 1 Cor. xv. 3, is sometimes cited. Luke is plainly Pauline in character: in the doctrines of faith, of the extension of the gospel to the Gentiles, of the gift of the Holy Spirit; in emphasizing the dangers of riches and the blessings of poverty, and in the general prominence given to prayer, Luke is like Paul.¹

Those who reject this early date for the Gospel of Luke, cite but one objection. They think the prophecy upon the lips of Jesus, concerning the overthrow of Jerusalem (xix. 43, 44; xxi. 24), must have been written by Luke after the event, rather than before, so detailed is it, and that therefore the Gospel was composed about A.D. 80.² But such a view is

¹ See Weiss, *Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 87; *Handbook of Introduction to the New Testament*, vol. ii., p. 307.

² Weiss, *Introduction*, vol. ii., p. 313; *Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 88; Abbott, *Encyc. Brit.*, "Gospels," vol. x., p. 813.

purely arbitrary. It is not an argument ; it is merely an opinion. If one's understanding of the predictive element in the utterances of Jesus does not allow such explicitness of detail, then, in view of the historic evidence already adduced, the line of lesser resistance for explanation is that passages such as this are a late interpolation. But all such opinions verge perilously near mere subjective whims. They are almost as incapable of denial as they are devoid of proof. Apart from this arbitrary, dogmatic bias, there is no good reason for rejecting either the statements of the early Fathers or the palpable inferences from the literary connection of the third Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles.

THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW. — Papias, as quoted by Eusebius,¹ says, "Matthew put together the oracles (λόγια) in the Hebrew language, and each one interpreted them as best he could." And yet the Fathers, in their use of Matthew, while recognizing that the Gospel was written in Hebrew,² nevertheless use our present Greek Matthew without any ex-

¹ *Church History*, Bk. III., chap. xxxix.

² Irenæus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. i., § 1 ; Eusebius citing Pantænus, *Church History*, Bk. V., chap. x. ; Origen, cited by Eusebius, *Church History*, Bk. VI., chap. xxv. ; Eusebius himself, *Church History*, Bk. III., chap. xxiv. ; Epiphanius, *Heresies*, Bk. LI., chap. ii., § 1 ; Jerome, *De Viris Illustribus*, chap. v.

planation of how the Hebrew became Greek. Hence Professor Weiss infers that the Greek Matthew must have been early, and must have been true to the Hebrew predecessor.¹ Professor Weiss is one to maintain, however, that the *λόγια* must have been an original document, indeed the oldest source of which we have knowledge, and must have contained an account chiefly of Christ's sayings, with but slight narrative portions; that from this source all our evangelists have drawn, and that the present Greek Gospel of Matthew, based chiefly upon this Hebrew document, was yet not written by Matthew himself, but by some unknown author in about the year A.D. 70.²

Our Greek Matthew has the characteristics of an original composition and not a translation from the Hebrew.³ 1. Its Old Testament quotations in the narrative portion are taken, not from the Hebrew original, but from the Septuagint Greek. 2. It translates Hebrew names and expressions into Greek,⁴ as in

¹ *Introduction*, vol. ii., p. 235. This is a natural inference; for certainly if the Fathers, while recognizing a Hebrew original, employ a Greek text with perfect confidence, they must regard the Greek as equivalent to the Hebrew.

² See Weiss' *Life of Christ*, vol. i., p. 69.

³ See Smith's *Bible Dictionary*, "Matthew," vol. iii., p. 1834.

⁴ See Horne's *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the New Testament*, vol. iv., p. 237.

i. 23, "Immanuel; which is, being interpreted, God with us;" xxvii. 33, "Golgotha, that is to say, The place of a skull;" xxvii. 46, "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" 3. Professor Weiss¹ mentions the following plays upon words (*Wortspiele*) as indicating the work of an original composer and not a translator: vi. 16, "Moreover, when ye fast be not as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure (*ἀφανίζουσιν*) their faces that they may be seen (*φανῶσιν*) of men to fast;" xxi. 41, "He will miserably destroy those miserable men," (*κακούς κακῶς ἀπολέσει αὐτούς*); xxiv. 7, "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom" (*ἔθνος ἐπὶ ἔθνος καὶ βασιλεία ἐπὶ βασιλεία*); and he also instances two cases of word-invention, scarcely possible on the pen of a translator, vi. 7, *βαπτολογεῖν* (use vain repetitions) and *πολυλογία* (much speaking). These characteristics have forced scholars of late with general unanimity to regard our present Matthew as an original composition in the Greek. The problem then is to reconcile the prevailing testimony of the Fathers with this fact, or, rather, to harmonize, by some plausible and probable theory, the conflicting testimony. The

¹ *Introduction*, § 47.

fact that the Fathers, who declare that the Gospel was written in Hebrew, yet use this Greek as the genuine work of Matthew without reference to its translation, gives color to a widespread opinion¹ that Matthew, the tax-collector, accustomed to write and keep accounts in both languages, penned a Gospel in each language, and that the one in Greek, being the fuller and more complete and in the more extensively used speech, at length wholly superseded the other. The time of composition, then, of both may be spoken of as the same, or very nearly the same.

With this hypothesis relieving us of perplexity concerning the language of composition, we next inquire after the date of the Gospel. Irenæus² says, "Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the church." According to general testimony of the past, Peter and Paul both met martyrdom at Rome during the Neronian persecution; viz., A.D. 68. Peter had not, however, come to Rome as early as A.D. 63, when the account in

¹ See Zöckler's *Handbuch der Theologischen Wissenschaften*, Band I., ii. Abtheilung, p. 46.

² *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. i. § 1.

Acts concludes, for had he been present surely some mention of him must have been made; and when the Epistle to the Romans was written¹ he surely was not in Rome, for though twenty-six persons at Rome are saluted individually by Paul (Rom. xvi.), no mention whatever is made of Peter in the epistle. From this testimony of Irenaeus, therefore, it is fair for us to infer that Matthew wrote between A.D. 63 and A.D. 68.

But we can fix the date more precisely. Eusebius² says that Matthew, having preached to the Hebrews, delivered to them the Gospel written in their own tongue as he was about to go unto others (*ὡς ἡμελλεν καὶ εἰς ἑτέροισι ἵναί*). If this is at the beginning of the Jewish war, as Professor Weiss maintains, then the year would be A.D. 66, the year when that war broke out.³ Professor Weiss further maintains that Matthew, in the parenthetical clause of xxiv. 15, "When therefore ye see the abomination of desolation, which was spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (*let him that readeth understand*), then let them that are in Judea flee unto the mountains," indi-

¹ A.D. 58, Cf. Conybeare & Howson, Appendix ii.

² *Church History*, Bk. III., chap. xxiv.

³ Professor Wellhausen, *Encyc. Erit.*, "Israel," vol. xiii., p. 427.

cates the time of writing to be when the predicted destruction is impending, when the dangers to his native commonwealth continue; and this would be shortly after the breaking out of the war in A.D. 66, that is in A.D. 67. This year, therefore, A.D. 67, seems, in keeping with the testimony of Irenæus and Eusebius and of Matthew himself, to approximate the date of the composition.

I think, still further, that the items to which Horne refers¹ as indicating the composition at the time of persecution and tribulation, which he understands as those early years when Paul was active in harassing the church, may still better apply to the condition of affairs when Roman legions were threatening Jerusalem, and the Temple was on the verge of destruction.²

THE GOSPEL OF MARK. — Of Mark, Papias says,³ "Mark, having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately whatsoever he remembered. It was not, however, in exact order that he related the sayings or deeds of Christ. For he neither heard the Lord nor accompanied him. But afterwards, as I said, he accompanied Peter, who accommodated his

¹ *Introduction*, vol. iv., pp. 230, 231.

² See Matt. x. 21, 22, 34-36, passages which are not in any parallel.

³ Quoted by Eusebius, *Church History*, Bk. III., chap. xxxix.

instructions to the necessities (of his hearers), but with no intention of giving a regular narrative of the Lord's sayings. Wherefore Mark made no mistake in thus writing some things as he remembered them. For of one thing he took especial care, not to omit anything he had heard, and not to put anything fictitious into the statements." In this testimony we notice first that Mark's Gospel is not recognized as following the strict chronological order,¹ and that even Peter was not so particular about mere chronology as of adaptation to the necessities of his hearers. Yet the accuracy of statement is implied in the case of Peter, and vouched for in the case of Mark. Another point to observe is that Mark is said to have written what he *remembered* and what he *had heard*, while Peter is spoken of in the past tense, the implication certainly being that Peter is already dead. Irenæus² says, ". . . while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the church. After their departure [i.e., death], Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down in writing what had been preached by Peter."

¹ Certainly no other "order" can here be intended; for the Gospel of Mark surely has a literary and logical order, to which neither Papias nor any one else, then or now, could take exception.

² *Against Heresies*, Bk. III., chap. i., § 1.

Since Peter's life was not long spared after leaving Palestine, the same point of time seems indicated here as in Papias, after A.D. 66 certainly, when Peter had left Palestine, and probably after A.D. 68, when Peter was already dead. In Mark is no reference to the destruction of Jerusalem, which occurred in A.D. 70; hence the time of composition must be found between A.D. 68 and 70, that is, probably in A.D. 69.

We have now at hand the following historical data for use in attempting to solve the Synoptic problem: Luke was probably written between A.D. 60 and A.D. 63, Matthew (our Greek Matthew) in A.D. 67, and Mark in A.D. 69. A Hebrew Matthew is also to be taken into account. With this historical evidence we are debarred at the outset from accepting as an explanation of the literary difficulties the "Mutual Dependence" theory; because Mark, who writes chronologically last, we find to have the largest proportion of coincidences with the other Gospels. This, while seeming at first thought to indicate the natural source from which Mark drew his material, becomes inadequate when we consider that what is peculiar to Matthew and Luke, Mark, for some wholly inexplicable reason, has seen fit to omit. On the Mutual Dependence theory we may readily account for

additions incorporated in each later writing from oral tradition or from written source, but omissions of matter no less important than the matter employed is inexplicable.

It is evident from Luke's preface that documents were early produced. Luke does not imply that there may not have been documents emanating from eye- and ear-witnesses, upon which he relies. He merely implies that among the written attempts preceding his, order and arrangement and extent of matter were not such as eye- and ear-witnesses afforded him. It is altogether plausible, indeed probable, that Matthew, the only one of the apostles habituated (at his collector's table) to the use of the pen before his call to discipleship, should have been the first to have felt the impulse to write, and that, too, not long after the ascension, certainly a considerable time before Luke wrote his Gospel. What Matthew then did, others outside the apostolic circle would attempt. It is these unapostolic narratives, doubtless, irregular and incomplete, not issuing from eye- and ear-witnesses, to which Luke would naturally object. The other apostles were fresh from their fishing, "unlearned and ignorant men" (as the Jewish rulers termed them, Acts iv. 13), unprepared for literary work until after longer

training in preaching, when at length the necessity of writing became both apparent and urgent. Luke, as he wrote, would naturally employ the apostolic document at his command, Matthew's *λόγια*. He had the literary taste; for he had consulted many such documents, as he himself declares, and his style of writing is that of a literary adept. No portion of the New Testament is in better Greek than his few opening sentences. To the written source he would add considerable from the oral testimony of eye- and ear-witnesses. It was his design to enlarge upon and correct his predecessors. He was a companion of Paul. His oral and written sources would therefore be largely such as Paul would approve. That Paul knew thoroughly the events in the life of Jesus we cannot doubt, although not himself an eye-witness with the Twelve. He had, however, heard Stephen preach and Peter preach, and doubtless the other apostles. He had learned the details of Christ's life so that he could remind his hearers at Ephesus of what Jesus had said (Acts xx. 35), and by so doing repeat what no evangelist has recorded; he could himself "placard" Christ before the eyes of the Galatians (Gal. iii. 1). The man who had conducted an inquisition against the Christians, accustomed as he was

by the best education of the day to literary research, would also have found in his inquiry the writings of his victims, and busied himself as much in investigating them as in searching out the men. What subsequently he preached of Christ, he would have derived from reliable written and oral sources, the testimony of apostles. Paul, therefore, in as far as he aided and countenanced Luke, contributed apostolic reminiscences. Assurance of this gave both Luke and Paul confidence to write.

When at length Matthew wrote in Greek, he would naturally repeat what in substance he had at first written in Hebrew, because these were the facts, penned under the first impressions and reiterated and enforced by constant repetition; yet he would add to them what at first he had omitted, and add, at that distance in time, not in chronological order, but in connection with similar topics. He would draw from other sources, written some of them by his colleagues, or spoken by them all as their preaching had continued.

Mark's Gospel, we must remember, though written last, has the largest proportion of agreements with the other two, and preserves, therefore, most nearly the oldest source from which the others drew. From what we know of Mark,

and Peter, whom Mark "interpreted," this is exactly what we should expect. Peter, though impulsive of speech and ardent in action, was yet in character and conviction extremely conservative. He it was who was so slow to realize the reception of the Gentiles within the circle of divine grace that a special vision was necessary for him; and yet he lapsed, as Paul declares in the epistle to the Galatians, back to the old exclusiveness. Peter's Epistle¹ and Peter's speeches evince tenacity of thought and plan. Mark, likewise, is conservative, indisposed to changes and innovations, as the apostolic history plainly shows. When he turned back from Paul and Barnabas at Pamphylia, he evinces his yearning for the old security of home, his lack of confidence in the new missionary enterprises, and his dissatisfaction, also, that at this time his kinsman, Barnabas, had been supplanted in leadership and influence by the younger man, Paul. With these conservative characteristics it is natural, therefore, that both Peter and Mark should cling to the earliest form of the Gospel narrative, though not the most complete. Mark's brevity, graphic, pearl-like rapidity, and his large proportion of coinci-

¹ I use the singular in reference to the First Epistle, against the genuineness of which no reasonable objection has been raised.

dences with the other Gospels, find, also, an explanation from these considerations.

The following, therefore, seems to me the line of least resistance for the solution of the Synoptic problem. An account of the words and deeds of Christ early took definite form on the lips of the apostles. This we call the oral Gospel. Soon various written records of this oral Gospel, with modifications according to the more specific information or the temperament of the writers, were made. Matthew, accustomed to the use of the pen, would be one of the first to write; and his record, because from an apostle, would be regarded with special respect. These may all have been in Hebrew. Matthew's, at least, was. At length Paul, missionary to the Gentiles, writing epistles in Greek, leaving converts behind him in every city, feels the need of a Gospel in Greek, comprehensive and consecutive in character. This is penned by his companion, Luke, and addressed to Theophilus, probably some Gentile official of influence and repute. Luke can avail himself, as he writes, of this oral Gospel, known by himself and Paul, and of the many written narratives, but especially of Matthew's. A few years later Matthew himself, about to depart from Palestine and move amongst the Jews of the dispersion, feels

the impulse to write for them a Gospel in the Greek. He uses as a basis his previous narrative, but modifies that simple account, as his later, fuller appreciation of the Christ has brought into bold relief the salient features of that life, by particularly grouping the sayings of Jesus into discourses, and by laying stress upon the fulfilment of prophecy. A little later still, Mark in far-away Rome, bereft of Peter, who had been a father to him,¹ writes a Gospel in the form and phrases which Peter had approved. This is closely along the line of the first preaching, nearly as Matthew had written in the Hebrew.

This explanation sets the composition of the three Synoptic Gospels in the seventh decade of the first century. It makes the order of composition to be Luke, Matthew, Mark. It assumes the existence of more than one source from which the writers drew in common, but chiefly the oral Gospel and Matthew's *λόγια*. It is true to the historic data. It also points to an elucidation of the literary difficulties, how Mark's Gospel may have its large percentage of coincidences, and Matthew's and Luke's their considerable proportion of divergences.

By the testimony of the Fathers the three

¹ Cf. 1 Pet. v. 13, "Mark my son."

Gospels are made practically apostolic. Luke's is associated with Paul, Mark's really issues from Peter, and Matthew's is by the apostle of that name. By this showing the Synoptic Gospels are witnesses of the highest order, coming from men who associated with Jesus intimately, and, as far as they were able, had a personal acquaintance with his words, his works, and his spirit.

CHAPTER XV.

THE CHRISTIAN SOURCES — THE JOHANNINE PROBLEM.

To the student of the New Testament no questions are more perplexing and intricate than those pertaining to the genuineness and authenticity of the Fourth Gospel. Did John the evangelist write the Gospel usually ascribed to him? Is the evidence of the centuries convincing on this point? And does the testimony of the book itself corroborate what the church has claimed? Are there incompatible divergences between John's account of the life of Christ, and the account given by the other three evangelists? Do the other writings of John, his Epistles and the Apocalypse, weaken or strengthen our confidence in the Gospel? For a half-century discussion has been rife around these issues.

I cannot quite agree with Professor Riddle, who says, "The defence of the Fourth Gospel has become in large measure the defence of historic Christianity." I recognize the impor-

tance of the Fourth Gospel, and yet do not regard it as indispensable to an understanding of the historic Christ. It adds many details to the life of Christ ; it presents the Christ from a unique point of view ; it very largely interprets the life, which it at the same time records ; yet its characteristic features are nearly all germinant in the Synoptic narrative. It has become the fashion with many critics to magnify the differences between the Synoptics and the Fourth Gospel. But to my mind the differences, when given their fullest weight, relate more to form than to substance.

A quarter of a century ago, Dr. Edmund H. Sears, in his book, *The Fourth Gospel, The Heart of Christ*, made plain the essential unity of the four Gospels. He showed first, that Luke evidently had the confidence of John, and related things upon John's authority, and that consequently portions of the Third Gospel may be regarded as substantially John's testimony. The following considerations will bear out this statement.

1. We know that Paul met John at Jerusalem, and found him a "pillar of the church" (Gal. ii. 9), very near the time when Luke became the companion of Paul ; and "it is hardly conceivable," says Dr. Sears,¹ "that Luke

should not have been brought into personal intercourse with the disciple who had the most intimate relations with Jesus." That the visit of Paul to Jerusalem, recorded in the second chapter of Galatians, is to be identified with the visit at the time of the council described in the fifteenth chapter of Acts, is generally agreed by scholars;¹ and it is shortly after this council that the author of the Acts is with Paul, for he writes then in the first person (Acts xvi. 10 *sq.*) in a manner naturally to suggest an association with Paul already of some duration. This certainly gives the aspect of plausibility to the argument for contact between Luke and John.

2. In the preface to his Gospel, Luke indicates that he wrote on the authority of eye-witnesses. John had special opportunities for seeing and hearing the works and words of his Master. He was with Jesus more than a year

¹ See Paley, *Horæ Paulinæ*, chap. v., no. x.; Conybeare and Howson, *The Life and Epistles of St. Paul*, vol. i., chap. vii., note, and Appendix II.; Lightfoot, *Galatians*, p. 123 *sq.*; Godet, *Introduction to the New Testament*; *St. Paul's Epistles* p. 225 *sq.*; Sieffert, *Der Brief an die Galater*, p. 71 *sq.*; Weiss, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, p. 131 *sq.*; McClymont, *The New Testament and its Writers*, p. 132. Professor Ramsay, in his recent book, *St. Paul the Traveller*, identifies the visit of Gal. ii. with that mentioned in Acts xi. 30; but Professor Sanday in *The Expositor*, February 1896, pp. 81-88, to my mind successfully disputes this position.

before the Twelve were called ;¹ and he it was who became a son to the mother of Jesus, taking her to his own home (John xix. 25-27). Luke describes, as neither of the other Synoptists does, the experiences and thoughts of Mary, the mother, the angelophanies, and the mysterious overshadowing of the Holy Spirit by whom the child was conceived. This is in accord with the account which John gives of the pre-existent, divine nature of Jesus. Then, further, Luke's description of the childhood of Jesus, his visit to Jerusalem, the search of the parents, their thoughts and their utterances on finding him among the doctors of the temple, could only have come from the mother. "Mary might not have been living when Luke wrote; but whether so or not, John, adopted as her son under circumstances of bereavement unparalleled in any story of human sorrow, would be the person to whom she would confide such facts as are detailed in Luke's first chapter; and any writer must have been strangely remiss and careless, if, writing on such subjects, he would not eagerly avail himself of such authority."²

3. "Luke, in portions of his narrative, is in-

¹ From the time of the first meeting, John i. 35 *sq.*

² Sears, p. 209.

tensely Johannean. . . . Those parables which search the inner life most thoroughly, and go to the deeper hunger and thirst of the soul, are reported by Luke alone; and some of them plainly, all of them possibly, belong to that section of the ministry of Jesus which antedates the residence at Capernaum, but includes the sole discipleship of John and one or two others along with him. There are five of these parables preserved only by Luke, — the Prodigal Son, the Unjust Steward, Dives and Lazarus, the Good Samaritan, the Pharisee and the Publican. They differ from the parables properly so-called, and freely reported by Matthew, inasmuch as they are not drawn from the analogies of nature, but from human life, sometimes in its dearest and sweetest relations, and touch a tenderer chord of sympathy and love. They symbolize a more intimate relation between the heavenly Father and the human child, and they represent the universal brotherhood of the race. The beggar in Hades resting in Abraham's bosom, the publican justified before the Pharisee, the man robbed and half murdered in the city of priests, to be cared for by the despised Samaritan, show unmistakably the Saviour in conflict with Judaism in its own capital, where his ministry commenced with John and one or

two others as his fellow-disciples. They show Christianity thoroughly cleared of Judaism. These parables, where it is divinely embodied, could have come only through an eye- and ear-witness, and they are most congenial with the spirit of John."¹

4. There are events described by Luke, of which John, of all the twelve, was the sole spectator; and he probably was the only sympathizer with Jesus who would have reported the facts as Luke has recorded them. This is particularly true of events which took place in the high priest's palace into which John and Peter alone had been admitted (John xviii. 15, 16), and from which Peter, having denied his Lord, had gone out weeping (Luke xxii. 62, 63-71); and it is true also, when, the others having fled, John alone followed Jesus to Pilate's judgment seat and to the cross (Luke xxiii. 6-11, 26-44). The narrative of the transfiguration and of the agony in the garden, while given by all three Synoptists, yet contains details not found in Matthew or Mark; and these details are of a nature, sympathetic and spiritual, such as pre-eminently characterize the Fourth Gospel.²

¹ Sears, p. 210.

² E.g., in the transfiguration: praying, Luke ix. 28, 29; "the fashion of his countenance was altered," v. 29; "in glory," v. 31; "and he spake of his decease which he was about to accomplish at

Now at these scenes none but Peter, James, and John were present; and the inference is certainly natural that the likeness between the Third and the Fourth Gospels is due to one common source of information, John.

The Fourth Gospel and the First Gospel have noticeable similarities also. The philosophical form of statement in the first chapter of John is not found in Matthew's Gospel; but the same thought in substance is recorded near the end of the eleventh chapter: "All things have been delivered unto me of my Father; and no one knoweth the Son, save the Father; neither doth any one know the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him" (Matt. xi. 27).¹ Christ, as the judge

Jerusalem," v. 31; "Now Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw his glory, and the two men that stood with him," v. 32; "it came to pass, as they were parting from him," v. 33; "my chosen," v. 35. In the garden of Gethsemane: "Pray that ye enter not into temptation," Luke xxii. 40; "was parted from them about a stone's cast; and he kneeled down," v. 41; "if thou be willing," v. 42; "And there appeared unto him an angel from heaven, strengthening him: and being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat became, as it were, great drops of blood falling down upon the ground," vv. 43, 44; "when he rose up from his prayer," v. 45; "for sorrow," v. 45; "Why sleep ye? rise," v. 46.

¹ Rev. J. A. Cross, M.A., in *The Expositor*, February, 1896, p. 151, cites this passage, Matt. xiii. 16, 17, and Luke x. 21-24, as evidence that the theology, which is regarded as peculiar to John, existed long before him, and only the language and style are en-

of men, is set forth in the Fourth Gospel (iii. 16-21; v. 22, 26-30; viii. 15-18; xii. 44-50). So is he in the First Gospel, with a vividness unsurpassed (xxv. 31-46). The two descriptions differ in form rather than in substance. The divine character of Jesus, so prominent in the Fourth Gospel, is also plainly indicated in the First Gospel, not only in the miracles performed, the teaching, which was with authority (Matt. vii. 29), and the ascription of omniscience (ix. 4; xii. 25; cf. Mark ii. 8; xii. 15), but by direct statement at the conclusion of the Gospel, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. xxviii. 18-20). It must be remembered also that Matthew records the promise on the lips of Jesus which virtually acknowledges omnipresence, "Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I will be there" (Matt. xviii. 20). It may be remarked here also that the differences between John and Paul are more in form than in substance. Professor G. B. Stevens, D.D., of Yale, in his *The Johannine Theology*, p. 370, sums up a comparison between John and Paul in these words: "It appears to me, therefore, that the two apostles, notwithstanding the formal differences in the development and application of their ideas of love, are essentially one."

three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them " (xviii. 20). As in John, Jesus is reported as saying, "I and my Father are one" (x. 30), and calling God repeatedly his Father (v. 17, 43; vi. 32; viii. 19, 38, 49, 54; x. 18, 25, 29, 37; xiv. 2, 7, 20, 21; xv. 1, 8, 10, 15, 23; xx. 17), so in Matthew the same relationship is declared on the lips of Jesus in the same terms (Matt. vii. 21; xii. 50; x. 32, 33; xi. 27; xv. 13; xvi. 17; xviii. 10, 19, 35; xx. 23; xxv. 34; xxvi. 29, 39, 42, 53).

The Synoptic Gospels are, in good measure, a vindication of the Fourth Gospel; and the historic evidences adduced for them bear also largely upon the genuineness and authenticity of the other; and yet the Johannine problem is distinct. The full scope of the problem may be seen from a survey of the subjects which it is necessary for an investigator to examine before he can pronounce upon the genuineness of the Gospel.¹

¹ For this examination many books of reference would be helpful, but a few may suffice. Three seem indispensable: The Bampton Lectures for 1890 entitled *Modern Criticism Considered in its Relation to the Fourth Gospel*, by Archdeacon H. W. Watkins; *The Fourth Gospel, Evidences External and Internal of its Johannine Authorship: Essays by Ezra Abbot, Andrew P. Peabody, and Bishop Lightfoot*, 1801; and *Introduction to the Johannine Writings*, by Paton J. Gloag, D.D., 1801. I mention the following also, which, if accessible, should be consulted: The commentaries on John of

1. He must make an analysis of the Gospel of John. It is necessary to distinguish between epitomizing and analyzing. Epitomizing is a mechanical process by compression ; it simply eliminates words and reduces bulk. Analyzing is, so to speak, a chemical process by which the constituent elements of motive, argumentation, and logic are discovered. What may be regarded as the theme of the book ? What does it attempt to show, or prove ? What are its natural divisions ? To analyze upon the basis of mere geographical or chronological divisions is to fail of the thought-element in the book. The analysis should spring from the nature of the narrative.

2. He must compare the Gospel of John with the Synoptic record. It is necessary to notice, first, the differences in literary form, including both the structure of the whole, as brought out in the analysis, and also the differences in striking words and phrases ; then to

Godet, Westcott, Weiss, and Plummer (*Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*) ; the *Introductions to the New Testament* of Weiss, Salmon, and Dods ; Weiss' *Life of Christ*, chaps. v., vi., and vii. ; and a series of articles begun in *The Contemporary Review*, September, 1891, and in *The Expositor*, November, 1891, and reproduced in *The Magazine of Christian Literature*, beginning with October, 1891. See my article, "The Fourth Gospel: An Outline for the Study of its Higher Criticism," *The Biblical World*, March, 1893, pp. 190-193.

compare them in their agreements in recorded incidents, in their omissions and their apparent contradictions; and, finally, to compare them, as they usually are compared, in respect to their "differences as to place and form of our Lord's teaching, and differences as to the view which is given of his Person."¹

3. An examination must be made of the external evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of John's Gospel. The reader must remember that "genuineness" refers to the question of authorship, and "authenticity" refers purely to credibility. Who wrote the book? When this question is conclusively answered, the authorship is established. But there remain still the questions, Was the author in a position to know the facts which he states? and, Was he sufficiently free from prejudice or bias to relate them without alteration? External evidence is evidence drawn from sources outside the book itself. A search for this evidence will lead the investigator to an examination of the writings of the church Fathers, and all extant literature bearing upon the subject, particularly in the second century. While this evidence has been collected and sifted, and

¹ Westcott's *Introduction to the Study of the Gospels*, chap. v., § ii., will be found helpful on this subject.

weighed again and again, yet, in order to know its value, a true student must test it for himself. He should, if accessible, see in their original setting all the quotations which his guides adduce.¹

4. An examination of the internal evidence for the genuineness and authenticity of John's Gospel must also be made. This evidence is to be found in the book itself. Do the characteristics of the narrative show that it was written by a Jew, by one who lived or had lived in Palestine, by one who had seen the events which he describes; and are there indications that one of the apostles, in close company with the principal character, wrote it? Answers to these questions can legitimately be sought in the book itself.

5. The evidential value of the epistles of John to the authenticity of the Fourth Gospel must be weighed. But when the epistles of John are brought into court, the critic must first know their worth. He must, therefore, examine their claims for acceptance as genuine writings of the apostle. When their genuineness is established, then they should be com-

¹ The Fathers can be consulted in the series published by the Christian Literature Company, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers*, and *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*.

pared in style, structure, and subject-matter with the Gospel.¹

6. The Gospel of John must be compared with the Apocalypse of John. This topic of investigation demands first an examination of the genuineness of the Apocalypse.² The date of its composition must be at least approximately fixed in view of all the existing phenomena. The history of its criticism through all the centuries must be scanned. Its style, grammatical and rhetorical, must be compared with that of the Gospel; and then the question must be satisfactorily answered whether the two documents could have originated in the same mind, and, if so, what theory consistent with all the facts known will satisfactorily account for their differences.³

7. A biography of John the evangelist must be prepared in order to appreciate fully his historical setting as a man and as an author. This will involve, not only an examination of the data concerning John to be found in the New Testament, with a careful weighing of all the

¹ See Bishop Westcott's *The Epistles of St. John*.

² The recent partition theories of the origin of the Apocalypse are described in an article, "Recent Theories of the Origin of the Apocalypse," by Rev. E. C. Moore, published in *The Journal of Biblical Literature*, vol. x., part i., 1891.

³ A helpful work is Simcox's "The Revelation of St. John the Divine" in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools and Colleges*.

inferences that may be legitimately deduced therefrom, but also a thorough investigation of the claims which have been made from the scant testimony of Papias to the existence of a presbyter John, and his subsequent identification with the evangelist, and also a searching scrutiny of the evidence for the Ephesian residence of the evangelist, and his absorption of Greek philosophy and Greek culture sufficient to enable him to write the Fourth Gospel.

The problem opened by these seven topics will be found to be intricate and involved. Friends who set out on the journey of investigation together will come to many a crossing and by-path where fidelity to personal judgment and personal conviction will compel them to part company, at least for a season; and yet the degree of unanimity finally arrived at is surprising, in view of the difficulties.

To my mind the internal characteristics of the Gospel prove clearly that it was written by a Jew, by one of Palestine, by one personally acquainted with the events described, by one within the apostolic circle, and by one of the three more intimate companions of Jesus, who must be identified with the unnamed disciple "whom Jesus loved" (John xiii. 23; xix. 26; xx. 2; xxi. 7, 20, 24).

As for external evidence : I think it has been proved¹ that Justin Martyr was acquainted with this Gospel ; that it is obvious that Tatian used it ; and that the common acceptance of it by Irenæus and his contemporaries, with whom Polycarp, a disciple of John, had been in intimate communication, establishes the time of its composition as back in the first century, and by the disciple himself. The genuineness of the First Epistle of John is clear ; and, since it so closely resembles the Fourth Gospel in style and spirit and matter, it is corroborative of that. Although the Apocalypse and the Gospel are unlike in style, structure, allusions, spirit, and almost every literary characteristic ; yet if, as seems probable, they were composed about twenty-five or thirty years apart, the Apocalypse before A.D. 70 and the Gospel after A.D. 95, then their contrasts and contradictions can be readily accounted for by the changes which in that space of time would take place in a Jewish peasant of refined spirit, yet previously of scant advantages, who finds himself charged with a world-mission, and surrounded with an atmosphere, both human and divine, of the richest culture, — he would naturally change by enlargement.

¹ By Ezra Abbot, see above, p. 131.

It is true that the Fourth Gospel presents a Christ immediately conscious, at his first public appearance, of his Messianic character, and needing not that "any should bear witness concerning man; for he himself knew what was in man,"¹ while the Synoptics represent him as more gradually and less completely assuming the attributes of omniscience; it is true that the Fourth Gospel indistinctly marks the termination, and in some places the character, of the utterances of Jesus, while the other three mark off the utterances with the precision of a stenographer; and yet the Fourth Gospel is more exact in chronological details than the other three; it shows, as they do not, the development of the hostility which at length culminated in the crucifixion; it presents a religious philosophy of which they are deficient; the Fourth Gospel not only records the life, but also interprets the life, as the best biographies of even human subjects have ever done. The Fourth Gospel has a message, charged with spiritual insight, adapted to human need, which is largely self-evidencing, and is supplementary to the annals of the Synoptists.

¹ See John i. 50; ii. 25.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GENERAL VIEW OF THE SOURCES.

FROM the foregoing examination of the sources of the life of Jesus, we have seen that if all Christian believers, all Christian institutions, all Christian writings, and all special advocates of Christianity in all the centuries, were swept out of existence, yet there would remain of heathen and Jewish witnesses sufficient to establish, as perfectly historical, the life and death and wonderfully widespread influence of a personage in Judea, in the reign of Tiberius, and during the procuratorship of Pontius Pilate, who bore the name of Christ. Very early in the second century Roman historians and Roman officials, and a little later even a Roman satirist, take cognizance of him and of his influence upon his followers as striking phenomena among the people, and presenting weighty problems in government.

Although a Jewish philosopher, a Jewish analyst, and Jewish ecclesiastics, whom we examine, fail to contribute complete or satisfactory

evidence concerning the Christ, yet they say and imply sufficient to make his place and influence in relation to them perfectly intelligible in its historic setting as elsewhere described.

Of Christian witnesses we have a vast store. Even the rocky walls of the Catacombs bear early and unambiguous testimony to the main features, the extraordinary influence, and the supreme significance of that life, which reached unto thousands of all classes of earth, and also extended even beyond death, sustaining the persecuted, and fortifying the tortured.

Wonderfully the Gospels of the New Testament canon are brought into prominence. All Christian witnesses point to them. They have scarcely a rival. The so-called apocryphal Gospels are so grotesque and absurd as hardly to come into comparison. By contrast the apocryphal writings, however, but render the purity, simplicity, modest self-restraint, and credibility of the Gospels the more apparent. Remarkable is it that outside of these Gospels so little is contributed of the details of Christ's life. Of his sayings there are a few which may be looked upon with a good degree of credence; but none of them are especially significant as compared with his sayings written in the Gos-

pels. Of his deeds scarcely an incident of importance is suggested.

The early Christian writers point not to themselves, but to the Gospels, and the apostles, and the Christ. Those nearest to the apostles in time still recognize themselves as far removed in eminence and authority, because the apostles had associated with the Christ, as they themselves had not. To the Fathers the Gospels early became the standard of narration of the details of the life of Christ. Justin Martyr, before the middle of the second century, employs these Gospels under the name *Memoirs of the Apostles*. His pupil, Tatian, combines them into a single narrative, called the *Diatessaron*. Before the time of Justin, Polycarp, Ignatius, Clement of Rome, and the writers of the documents known as *The Epistle of Barnabas*, and *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles*, used the language of the New Testament in a manner to imply quotation from a written source. Later in the second century, in the time of Tertullian and Irenæus, the Gospels are quoted almost entire, and are described as alone authoritative, as divinely appointed, as essential in number, and clearly apostolic; and through the intimate acquaintance of Irenæus with Polycarp, who had sat at the feet of John,

this testimony really reaches back beyond the second century into the first, and in substance sets forth the testimony of both Polycarp and John. Through Irenæus we have an unbroken chain of witnesses back into the very apostolic group.

By our investigation we have learned that the four Gospels, issuing from men of the first century, actually present in every case the testimony of men who were associated with Christ during the years of his public ministry. Even the Gospel of Luke, which rests upon the sanction of Paul, was drawn from earlier sources, doubtless apostolic. Matthew assumes great prominence as a witness because of his written *λόγια*, which in all probability the other Synop- tists employed; and of the Greek Gospels, now in hand, undoubtedly Mark's reproduces most closely the form of this original work of Matthew.

While the coincidences and peculiarities of the first three Gospels present a problem, they also afford an assurance. The coincidences are sufficient in number and character to establish essentially one harmonious account of the substance of the life of Christ. The divergences are such as would distinguish separate witnesses who have added, each his own personality, to

the substance of the common source. While we cannot enumerate all the separate witnesses who speak to us through the four, yet we have learned sufficient to name at least the following : Matthew, Peter, John, Mark, Luke, and Paul. Instead of four, therefore, we really listen in the Gospels of the New Testament to many witnesses, six of whom we can definitely name.

Can any one who follows but this one line of testimony still ask whether Jesus Christ ever lived at all? When in exile on the island of St. Helena, the great warrior, with whose doubting query I began my first chapter, declared his later conviction in these words, "The Gospel is not a book ; it is a living being, with an action, a power ;" and he added, "The soul can never go astray with this book for its guide." But whether warrior, statesman, philosopher, poet, or philanthropist yield to the evidence for the life of Christ or not, must not he who employs historical methods, and, free from the bias of foregone conclusions, examines patiently the multiplicity of the testimony from the past, acknowledge the existence of the historic Christ and the essential truthfulness of the accounts in the New Testament which set forth the details of that life?

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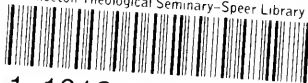
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